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THE

MARTYR'S TRIUMPH;

BURIED VALLEY;

AND

Other Poems.

By GRENVILLE MELLEN.

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TO

MRS L. H. SIGOURNEY

This Volume

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

In relation to the principal poem in this volume, the reader will perceive, that, being thrown back upon so early a period of English history, as connected with Christianity, some license, upon the strength of distance, has been assumed, in a few particulars, which might otherwise be questionable. It was believed, however, that if a circumstance or two were anticipated for the purpose of giving a better force and interest to a tale perfectly and singularly simple, the anachronism would be pardoned for the sake of the auxiliaries. For this reason the Bible and Crucifix are introduced in the manner they are.

As for the subject-matter of the Poem, I venture to say nothing more about it, than that it seems to me but a modification, or rather a first and powerful development of the same spirit, that many centuries after, led *our fathers* to flight across the sea, and began a new empire in the Western World.

Some of the shorter pieces published in this volume have appeared before, from time to time, in the Unit-

ed States Literary Gazette, and in one or two of the Annuals within a few years. I make no apology — indeed I can hardly give a reason for presenting them in this way, again, save that which is common to most men — a wish to bring their scattered works — their *disjecta membra* — together, at some period, and, if they must expose them, to do it in some form and body, even though it may chance to be of unseemly and unfortunate presence; — to throw them into a kind of companionship, so that they may all rejoice or suffer together.

With these remarks, perhaps altogether useless, the volume is respectfully submitted, bearing with it all due acknowledgments to the public for the often unexpected favor with which some of its minor pieces have been received.

G. M.

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THE first man who laid down his life, in Britain, for the Christian faith, was Saint Alban. Saint he has been called for that reason. And the title may be continued to him in mark of honor and respect, now that it has ceased to carry with it a superstitious meaning to our ears.

A Christian priest, flying from his persecutors, came to the city of Verulamium, and took shelter in Alban's house. He not being a christian, concealed him for compassion; but when he observed the devotion of his guest, how fervent it was, and how firm, and the consolation and joy which he appeared to find in prayer, his heart was touched; and he listened to his teaching, and became a believer. Meantime the persecutors discovered his retreat. But when they came to search the house, Alban, putting on the hair-cassock of his teacher, delivered himself into their hands, as if he had been the fugitive, and was carried before the heathen governor, while the man whom they sought, had leisure and opportunity to escape. Because he refused either to betray his guest, or to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods, he was scourged and then led to execution upon the spot where the Abbey now stands. 'The spot seemed,' says the venerable Bede, 'a fit theatre for the Martyr's Triumph.' A soldier died with him rather than be his executioner.

Fuller says, 'it was superstition in the Athenians to build an altar to the Unknown God, but it would be piety in us to erect a monument in memorial of these unknown martyrs, whose names are lost. The best is, God's Kalendar is more complete than man's best martyrologies; and their names are written in the book of Life, who on earth are wholly forgotten.'

SOUTHEY'S *Book of the Church, Vol. I.*

THE MARTYR'S TRIUMPH.

CANTO I.

'All this is well;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
With calm appearance to that blessed place
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be aton'd.'

MANFRED.

I.

Voice of the viewless spirit! that hast rung
Through the still chambers of the human heart,
Since our first parents in sweet Eden sung
Their low lament in tears — thou voice, that art
Around us and above us, sounding on
With a perpetual echo, 'tis on thee,
The ministry sublime to wake and warn! —
Full of that high and wondrous Deity,
That call'd existence out from Chaos' lonely sea!

II.

Voice that art heard through every age and clime,
Commanding like a trumpet every ear
That lends no heeding to the sounds of Time,
Seal'd up, for ay, from cradle to the bier!
That fallest, like a watchman's through the night,
Round those who sit in joy and those who weep,
Yet startling all men with thy tones of might —
O voice, that dwellest in the hallow'd deep
Of our own bosom's silence — eloquent in sleep!

III.

That comest in the clearness of thy power,
Amid the crashing battle's wild uproar,
Stern as at peaceful midnight's leaden hour;
That talkest by the ocean's bellowing shore,
When surge meets surge in revelry, and lifts
Its booming voice above the weltering sea;
That risest loudly mid the roaring cliffs,
And o'er the deep-mouth'd thunder goest free,
E'en as the silver tones of quiet infancy!

IV.

Spirit of God! what sovereignty is thine!
Thine is no homage of the bended knee;
Thou hast of vassalage no human sign;
Yet monarchs hold no royal rule like thee!
Unlike the crowned idols of our race,
Thou dost no earthly pomp about thee cast,
Thou tireless sentinel of elder days! —
Who, who to CONSCIENCE doth not bow at last,
Old Arbiter of Time — the present and the past!

V.

Thou wast from God when the green earth was young,
And man enchanted rov'd amid its flowers,
When faultless woman to his bosom clung,
Or led him through her paradise of bowers;
Where love's low whispers from the Garden rose,
And both amid its bloom and beauty bent,
In the long luxury of their first repose!
When the whole earth was incense, and there went
Perpetual praise from altars to the firmament.

VI.

O, being of the sky! — could I declare
Thy majesty of birth — thy proud descent —
The image of the glorious thou didst bear,
When God's first bow above creation bent;
Could I proclaim some story of thy power,
Or wake some long forgotten note again,
That thrill'd the listener in some happiēr hour,
My humble lyre perchance might yield a strain,
Which, tho' a weary one, had not been struck in vain.

VII.

Lo! then, I hail thee in the first pure home
Of unpolluted man — of him, who bow'd
Under the arches of this high blue dome,
And saw a worship in the sea and cloud!
Who, like a monarch, with an eagle glance,
And aspirations royal, unconfin'd,
Trode the large realm of his inheritance;
Of man! that creature of the Eternal Mind —
Art's last perfection — by Omnipotence designed!

VIII.

Why kneels he on the broad and quivering earth,
And pours his volumed spirit out in prayer,
If the Divinity claim not its birth,
Its unbought power, and noble lineage there!
What can he ask, to whom a world is given?
Why kneels he till his long locks veil his brow —
The privileg'd and proud! — the child of Heaven!
'Tis no idolatry that sways him now,
But the deep voice of duty bids him bless and bow!

IX.

He walks while morn is gathering in the sky,
Up through the wilderness of clouds and dew;
And the World's worship breaks upon his eye,
In service grand, perpetual, and new.
He sees the kindling of the elements;
And on his bounding bosom's glad surprise
Comes a strange awe, undreamt-of and intense!
His heart goes out in praises, and he cries
In wonder and in joy throughout his Paradise!

X.

Then in the deep, deep sabbath of the noon,
When from the heated hills there wavering goes
A summer incense up, and the bow'd bloom
Recoils beneath the withering repose,
He passes to the shade of mountain dell,
Mid clustering bees, and herds, a panting throng,
And casts him by some leaf-embosom'd well —
His faint lips move in low unutter'd song,
And silent thankfulness bides on him — deep and long.

XI.

He walks again, when evening like a cloud
Bows down in shadow from the wooded hills,
And night steals onward in her starry shroud,
And her bright company the concave fills;
He hears them quiring thro' the unfathom'd arch
Of the great sky — the silver crowns they wear,
Pouring a ceaseless lustre round their march!
Then go the vesper chant, and joyous prayer
Up from his leaping soul, like birds — for God is there!

XII.

His life is all devotion. Winds and stars,
With music and with beauty, come around
And minister unto him. The golden bars
Of Heaven are loos'd, and peerless sight and sound
Lap his delighted sense. Above, he hears
'In reason's ear' the constellations call,
Each to her bright-ey'd sister — while the spheres
Proclaim the Father that hath fashion'd all,
The shining and the joyful that surround the ball!

XIII.

No book is open to his wilder'd gaze,
Full of strange tales and antiquated lore,
His nights to people, and harass his days;
No page, o'er which he fruitlessly shall pore;
But the illumin'd volume of the skies,
Stamp'd in eternal characters is there!
Outspread forever, and unchang'd it lies,
Rich in the wondrous lessons that it bare,
Ere yet the teeming globe was hung amid the air.

XIV.

He reads — he ponders — he beholds the lines,
Sublimely simple, bright with the command
To listen and adore. Th' unbounded mines
Of a wide mercy open round the wand,
Which its great Author waves above the mind
Of Earth's first children. Would ye know, like these,
The revelation from the holiest fount? go, wind
Your way, companionless, mid hills and trees —
Under the sailing stars, and by the sounding seas!

XV.

He wanders where the flowers, with silent breath,
By secret fountains bend in reverence;
Their glorious bloom yet unacquaint with death,
But pouring to the air their hoarded scents.
He asks — who rear'd ye in these lonely ways,
To scatter beauty thro' the forest wild?
And lo! the answer of perpetual praise!
New fragrance gathers on the evening mild —
He passes mid its sweets, instructed like a child!

XVI.

He gets him to the mountains — the old towers
That lift them yet around the peopled land;
Whereon the tempest-monarch sits and lowers;
The giants of the earth — the ancient band!
He asks; why loom ye thro' that cloudy veil
With shaggy sides, and forehead bald and riven!
And from those mighty statues, cas'd in mail,
Already the unchang'd response is given!
Behold! — in silent prayer, their summits point to Heaven!

XVII.

He questions the loud winds, at eventide,
When they lift up their voices with a shout,
As if some spirit from the darkness cried,
And bade the storms to revelry come out!
He asks — why sweep ye thro' the hollow sky?
Whence come ye? — whither go? — and at the word,
An answer stoopeth o'er him from on high —
The anthem of the winds! — sublimely heard
Down in earth's deepest dells — where every leaf is stirr'd!

XVIII.

He calls upon the pinion'd clouds to stay
Upon their trackless course, and answer him;
Why sail ye on your far and solemn way,
And with your shadowy pomp day's glory dim?
But lo! the broad-winged couriers of their God
Answer in thunder as they wheel above,
Making the ever-during hills to nod;
Or, lighting on the tir'd world like a dove,
Tell, in the whispering rain, their messages of love.

XIX.

Then to the broad blue bosom of the sea,
Just heaving in creation's morning time,
And dancing to the white shore joyously,
To the dulce music of its measur'd chime,
He turns with upthrown arms, and flashing brow!
'O, ocean, many-voiced! untried profound!
Tell me, to what old sceptre dost *thou* bow —
With all thy thronging waters, and the sound
As of ten thousand victor armies trampling round!'

XX.

He listens — and a voice as from the caves
Of the unsearched ocean upward swells,
And in the mingled tongues of all its waves,
Its deep-ton'd tale of adoration tells;
'My worship goeth up from day to day,
And up, from age to age, shall still ascend
To the great Infinite whom I obey!
The chorus of my billows, as they bend,
Rejoicing, from mid sea to earth's remotest end!'

XXI.

Then to the host that gleams above his head;
The starry eyes that sentinel the world;
That through the Heavenly harmony still shed
New beauty on a universe unfurl'd,
Once more he would appeal. With brow uprais'd,
He standeth dumb beneath their loveliness!
No word — no breath! — but stricken and amaz'd,
He feels within the eloquent excess,
And, taught of all the elements, kneels down to bless.

XXII.

This is the still small voice! — the voice that first
Bore witness unto man in solitude;
That spoke thro' nature, when in prime she burst
Pregnant with praise upon a world all good!
This is the voice of Conscience, that began
To teach him in his wandering, and tell
The warning word of duty to lost man;
Filling his bosom as a fountain well,
Guarded for ay, in power, by some enchanting spell!

XXIII.

Prayer was her first command. The teeming globe
Was full of it; and should mistaken man
Gather his silence round him like a robe,
And doubt between a blessing and a ban!
Should the divinity that sprang to earth,
And walk'd its gardens with a charter'd power,
Forget its thankfulness for such a birth,
While praise ascended from the frailest flower
That threw its brilliant beauty on Time's natal hour!

XXIV.

As yet no discord sends its sullen knell
Over the spirit's beautiful repose;
But oft as mellow evening comes to tell
Of day well spent, or oft as morning goes
On its high journey thro' the firmament,
Man turns him to the chamber of his rest,
With heart reproachless and with brow unbent —
Calm with the peaceful conscience of the blest,
Among whose thronging thoughts comes no unwelcome guest!

XXV.

But lo! the hour of trial — the rash hand
Of woman has pluck'd down the threaten'd doom,
And Cain goes forth with the eternal brand —
His early glory chang'd to endless gloom!
And while his burning curse illumes the path
Of death and desolation he shall tread,
A voice is round him like a voice of wrath,
And horrid spectres flit about his head,
Turning night's very darkness hideously red.

XXVI.

And this is Conscience — this the very voice
That whisper'd him to prayer in elder time,
For his vast heritage of boundless joys,
When the wide universe was in its prime;
This is the voice now rising in the tone
Of loud rebuke above Man's work of wo!
The magic of its morning music gone —
The tuneful harp-strings shatter'd at a blow,
O'er which, henceforth, alone, harsh echoings shall go.

XXVII.

Ah! who shall dare a Presence stern as this,
That comes unbidden on us, like the shapes
That from the murky palaces of Dis
Visit the troubled dreamer. And it breaks
Like a perpetual phantom on the sight
Of passing generations. The first sin
That touch'd the erring spirit with a blight,
At the same point let the tormentor in,
That o'er the stricken heart stern monarchy should win!

XXVIII.

Then Passion, with her dismal wings outspread,
Flies like a fiend above the wreck she's made,
Fulfilling oft her offices of dread,
And oft alas! in answering blood obey'd;
There, at her side, th' rebuking angel goes,
Grasping her victim yet in triumph warm,
And in the voice that first on Eden rose,
While a new majesty surrounds her form,
Speaks with the thunder's clearness thro' the spirit's storm!

XXIX.

Thus thro' the ages of recorded time,
Has this lone monitor abode with us,
Unconquer'd and unconq'rable ; and crime,
Crowned or crownless, feels the bitter curse
Of its upbraiding. Wisdom, that of old
Grew drunk and madden'd with the joys of sense,
And walk'd amid her palaces of gold,
Turn'd from her gilded glory with offence,
And call'd but 'vanity' earth's best inheritance.

XXX.

So he that travel'd in the lowly train
Of that unearthly Messenger, whose way
Was heralded by light that ne'er shall wane,
By stars, and shoutings of the sons of day —
That brother of the band of Gallilee,
When he denied HIM in the hall of doom,
HIM who was Lord of all the earth and sea,
'Wept bitterly,' and strait went out in gloom,
To join the elements in wailing round his tomb.

XXXI.

And he, the traitor — that in humble garb
Sat with his Master when he break the bread,
How feels he in his soul the rankling barb !
How starts he at a voice that wakes the dead !
While the earth trembles and the veil is rent,
And buried men come up, a quick despair
The lost disciple maddening forth has sent —
His brain with serpents coil'd, and bosom bare,
To launch the unsilenc'd spirit to the wandering air !

XXXII.

Again, in later time, behold the king,
Sated with splendor, wearily lay down
The sceptre and the ball, as some poor thing,
And as a hated one his care-worn crown!
See him to cloister'd cell with cowl go in,
Bidding the pomp that follows him farewell,
No longer thinking solitude a sin,
(1) But the confessional where he shall tell
Spain's monarch frailties o'er by lonely book and bell

XXXIII.

Turn then to Scotland's Glamis — he who quails
As the weird sisters beckon him to blood;
See how the spirit-startled tyrant pales
(2) Before ill-starr'd Dunsinane's waving wood!
And Britain's murtherous king — at dreamy nigh
Behold him from his couch in terror bound,
Dashing thick phantoms from his guilty sight,
And crying hoarsely to the battle sound,
As tho' long buried foes his guarded tent surround.

XXXIV.

And thus through all the world. The meanest slav
In whom the image of his God is veil'd,
Who seeks, thro' crime the felon's fated grave,
And sinks at last, unknown and unbewail'd —
He smites his bosom on the gallows tree,
And shrieks of warning from his bold offence,
To the last battling with his agony!
Lo! the same voice comes in rebukings thence,
As marks the monarch's prayer of splendid penitence

XXXV.

Thus rules the conscious spirit o'er our life,
In certain retribution of deep wo
For all the dark deeds mingling with the strife,
As on the common pilgrimage we go.
Thus from a speedy trial, at a bar
From which no summons issueth in vain,
We falter forth, condemn'd to wander far,
Perhaps for years, o'er the dull earth again,
With hearts doom'd never to be tenantless of pain.

XXXVI.

But ah! a nobler office waits it now,
Than curse and condemnation. It comes up,
Like the remembrance of some valiant vow,
Into the high place of the soul. The cup,
That first was rais'd to God and Liberty
Was hallow'd by its presence — and the arm,
Bar'd o'er Religion's altar by the Free,
Nerv'd by its holy voice, as by a charm
On the devoted champions round it, stern and calm!

XXXVII.

O soldiers of the cross! who like to ye
Who wag'd the mighty warfare of the Lord!
The hope ye fought for was Eternity —
Your shield was Sanctity, and Truth your sword!
Not the first heroes of the bravest band
That ever swept to glory, can compare
With ye who trode o'er Europe's waken'd land,
Rousing Rome's sleeping lion from his lair,
And heralding your faith, as trumpets, to the air!

XXXVIII.

Fathers of Freedom! ye have bound your brows
With a triumphant garland, verdant still!
With that undying bloom that only grows
On old Jerusalem's most holy hill;
The iron bands ye burst — the prize ye won,
The flush of sacred victory ye bore,
Shall be remember'd till all Time is done;
And with the memory, blessing shall come o'er
All hearts, in thankfulness outpour'd, from shore to shore.

XXXIX.

I sing not of thy fame, O mailed helm,
That rung in fight on Syria's battle plain,
And girdled brows that flash'd from every realm
(3) Where the warm hermit held his fever'd reign!
Not ye, ye warriors of the lance and lyre,
Who on the Holy City pour'd from far,
As to the lighting of some gorgeous pyre;
Your heartless pomp alas! was vain to her —
'Twas but the splendid funeral of the Sepulchre!

XL.

Your's was a struggle made mid gold and gems;
Kindled by minstrel tale and wild romance;
Where Kings clos'd onward in their diadems,
England's young champions, and the flower of France;
Where giant Knighthood bore the envied palm,
Mid tilt and tournament, and plumy sea,
And Superstition, with her visions warm,
Call'd many a warrior to the bended knee,
To penance and to vows, mid love and chivalry.

XLI.

And tho' your armies travers'd like a cloud,
Charg'd with the volleying thunder, the blue sea,
And burst upon the crescent deep and loud,
'Twas an unholy dream that prompted ye
To trample on that shore. Alas! for all
The proud and banner'd pageantry ye bore,
There still was bondage vile — the spirit's thrall,
(4) As in the Roman's triumph-train of yore
There went the Dacian slave, with galling chains bent o'er!

XLII.

O no! a nobler field was yours to win,
Than that made consecrate by banner'd wars;
To holier ranks your valiant did press in;
A holier hope was yours, ye conquerors!
Ye rose at Freedom's clarion voice; ye rose,
And girded on diviner panoply
Than earth had yet beheld. The long repose
Of the great deep of Nature broke, and ye
Marshall'd the sons of men on to their native sky!

XLIII.

The world had slept in shadow. The long years
Went heavily and haplessly away;
Crime was absolv'd by gold — could prayers and tears
Plead with her then her bloody course to stay?
Power trampled on the heart — the altar side
Where Pilgrim Faith in dimness rais'd her hand,
To bless and cheer the weary and the tried,
Was shook and shatter'd by the lawless band,
'With conscience wide as hell,' that withering trode the land.

XLIV.

The world had slept in shadow. But behold!
The darkness rent — a silver trump is heard —
And the deep-volum'd clouds are backward roll'd,
And heaving empires, like the sea, are stirr'd,
When the winds stoop upon it. There ascends
A cry from out the nations, that appals
The sternest one o'er crucifix that bends,
Within the temple of his dimmest walls,
As from the mountain tops, from land to land it calls.

XLV.

It is the cry of giant men, up-springing
Under the waking sky — aloud and free!
Their sunder'd chains and bars about them ringing,
As they emerge to light and liberty!
The Liberty of God — the light of mind —
The panting Spirit's freedom — all are theirs!
No earthly laurels to their brows they bind,
But each that finer flush of glory bears,
Which the high-purpos'd soul and destiny declares.

XLVI.

They hear the Chastener's voice, bidding awake
To watch, to pray, to suffer, and to die;
The Bible to their belted bosoms take,
And lead the van to immortality.
They see new hope and promise offer'd there,
And march, the marshall'd witnesses of power!
Not with the pomp which earthly victors wear,
But in the moral strength of that great hour,
That o'er the heaving land like Israel's cloud did tower!

XLVII.

Henceforth no rest forever! But a joy
Shines ceaseless round the Christian's pilgrimage:
To his bold breast he takes his idol boy,
And points him to that Heaven-illumin'd page;
And — 'there, when to the sullen tomb I go,
My brave first born' he cries, 'at night kneel down,
And let your spirit like a fountain flow
To the great God of Israel, who will own
And bless you, when earth's last best Comforter has flown.'

XLVIII.

Thus o'er the sleeping energies of man,
First broke the indignant mandate of the soul.
And lo! the unshrinking who defied the ban
Of an arm'd world, and drain'd the martyr's bowl,
Went to sublime reward; but as they rose,
And wav'd from closing clouds their dim farewell,
There sank a sterner, deadlier repose
Round those on whom the parted mantle fell;
The silence of deep night before the trumpet's swell!

THE MARTYR'S TRIUMPH.

CANTO II.

Son of Earth!
I know thee, and the powers which give thee power.
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings;
I have expected this — what wouldst thou with me?
'Tis over — my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me — and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me —
Fare thee well ————

MANFRED.

I.

To England's isle there came, in early time,
While yet the Roman eagle hover'd there,
A persecuted man. A warmer clime
Had brown'd his cheek, but his calm brow was fair;
And thought, in meek and pallid beauty, sat
In fixedness upon him. A deep eye
Gleam'd from the shelter of his shadowy hat,
And glanc'd full often to the stormy sky,
Where th' up-gathering company of clouds went by.

II.

O'er sea and hill and valley he had fled,
Long days and nights, a sad and weary way;
And oft he wish'd him with the sainted dead,
When at the eve by pilgrim fount he lay,
Or when by holy cross he knelt in prayer,
Under the flooding light of yonder dome,
And thought upon the curse that drove him there —
A hearth all desolate — a ruin'd home,
And all the thousand woes that bade him forth to roam.

III.

He had seen sorrow. Not that long decay
Of the sweet flowers of life that round us bloom,
So slow, that, tho' departed, yet they stay,
In the still incense of their early tomb;
Not in the quiet fading of the light
Of Hope's stars one by one — in solitude;
But in the blasting gloom of sudden night;
In his heart's blossoms crush'd by hands o'er-rude,
Where all he lov'd — his blest, his beautiful, had stood.

IV.

The best-loved and the beautiful! — the wife
That grew unto his bosom — and there died!
The creature that charm'd sorrow from his life,
And mov'd about him a perpetual bride;
The mother of his children — all that God
In mercy gives to mortals, he had seen
In horror gather'd to the reeking sod,
And Persecution's ban-dogs, loud and lean,
Howl'd o'er the wreck of all his altar-home had been.

V.

But he saw good in all. He drank the cup
As proffer'd by a father — and was still;
One look around — and then he lifted up
His voice in smother'd wail, and cried — 'Thy will,
O God, be done;' then bow'd upon their graves,
And took his pilgrim staff, and fainting fled,
Unheedingly, o'er mountain lands and waves,
Making with want and wo his lonely bed,
And his companions sole, the memories of the dead.

VI.

He fled, from country and from kin estrang'd;
The victim of a hard and heathen hate;
But with a waken'd hope, and spirit chang'd —
For lo! he now to God was dedicate.
The blessed Bible was the charm he bore;
The 'unknown' deities forever spurn'd,
While to the simple crucifix he wore,
Oft as his eye of humble faith was turn'd,
With a new flame of life his bosom's altar burn'd.

VII.

So with uncertain step he journey'd on,
Oft turning inward to some friendly dell,
Where the kind shade fell on him, tired and wan,
Or by deserted shrine, or holy well;
For still they track'd him forth from day to day,
Drawn by his cassock rude and restless eye —
Hunting the pilgrim like a beast of prey,
With frequent curse and loud insulting cry,
Oft rousing him from hurried dreams, again to fly!

VIII.

'Twas now that shadowy time when evening stole
To the low music of the falling leaves,
Over the solemn earth. The Wanderer's soul
Was troubled as an ocean, when it heaves
After pursuing storms have swept it o'er,
And call'd unto its deeps. He look'd around,
Dusted by toil — with weary travel sore,
And bending lowly to the dewy ground
Broke with his vesper prayer that solitude of sound.

IX.

Was it an answering voice that floated out
Into the night wind — falling on his ear
Like the far chorus of the song or shout?
Slowly his fever'd brow is raised to hear;
Then to his tottering staff once more he clings,
And as the heavy air his temple fans,
Nerv'd with despair along the path he springs,
And there, with panting frame, and lifted hands,
Before a low-brow'd gate, and humble pile he stands.

X.

Now speed thee, stranger! He hath enter'd in,
Waiting no word of welcome — and behold!
Around him rose the sculptur'd shrines of sin,
And o'er him darkning clouds of incense roll'd;
No voice — no sound — save the departing steps
Of hurrying feet — as tho', the offering done,
The votaries hasten'd to the curtain'd depths
Of their unholy temple. — It was won!
And there, amidst its rites, stood Sorrow's stricken son!

XI.

And yet he turn'd not — fled not — he had been
Too long to sights and sounds of death allied —
The blasting things of life too oft had seen
To cower in fear — the tortur'd and the tried!
He firmer grasp'd the talisman he wore,
And while the censer veil'd him like a cloud,
He bow'd his head upon that rocky floor,
And *there*, forth from a pilgrim's lowly shroud,
Ascended God's first sacrifice — he pray'd aloud!

XII.

And not unheard. For gliding to his side
Stood one of wavering faith, and guarded mien,
In whom a better spirit strove with pride,
And on whose cloudy temples might be seen
Those deepen'd lines — the ravages of thought —
The waste spots of old care, that come with years,
When earth's best beauty is remember'd not,
And memory her Hydra head uprears,
And the far future swells — a fount of bitter tears!

XIII.

'Who art thou?' — sudden on the prayerful broke —
As sudden to his feet the pilgrim sprung —
'Shelter' — he cried — nor other word he spoke,
But on his host with asking gaze he hung.
Long while he scann'd him with an answering eye —
His vestment rude — and sandals soil'd and worn,
And his lip curl'd, at length, inquiringly —
'Know'st thou — thou wretched heir of wrath and scorn!
Thy steps, a Christian priest to heathen halls have [borne!'

XIV.

'Shelter and mercy' was the quick response —
'Rest for the Pilgrim — secret cell and wall,
And he who gave to yonder starry fonts
This night their glory, shall repay thee all;
My hearth was desolated — and I fled
Upon a path of blood — beset with woes —
My hopes are buried — all — my lov'd ones dead —
And round my failing footsteps howl my foes;
O, then, for one short hour — protection—and repose!'

XV.

The Wanderer's head is bare — and his bent frame
Hung forward as to catch the coming tone;
And o'er the listener mantling fast there came
A deep, triumphant flush. Was mercy flown? —
Were curses mustering with the mounting blood
Which that high brow so eloquently dyed?
Or was it blest compassion, like a flood,
Bearing those godless barriers on its tide,
That had still holier assaults so long defied?

XVI.

It was the heart's fast victory, whose light
Pour'd on its conquering way. Yes — even there,
Where his cold idols glimmer'd thro' the night,
The Heathen melted at the pilgrim's prayer;
Quick tears of penitence and pity shone,
In tribute to his sad and stirring tale;
He look'd upon the laden and the lone,
And thus with spirit bursting from the mail
Of indurating years, spoke to the Pilgrim pale.

XVII.

'Thou hast prevail'd — this portal welcomes thee' —
He grasp'd the sinking wanderer as he spake —
'For, as I read thy lineaments, I see
A face that o'er me night on night doth break,
With a prophetic shadow; welcome in,
Son of the sorrowful! *here*, neither ban
Nor bolt of foe thy solitude shall win;
I will not call thee brother — but a man —
A victor proud indeed!—welcome thou tried and wan!'

XVIII.

Was it Conviction that so sudden past
O'er the benighted — laden with new life!
That bade him boldly to perdition cast
The weapons of a long and weary strife!
O, who shall tell the myst'ry that betrays
To good or ill, to glory or to shame! —
For he had heard of Jesus — and his days
And nights were echoing with that magic name,
That first in jubilee, or lips of angels came!

XIX.

So Conscience woke. But yet the child of sin,
Like one arousing from a troubled dream,
Fled from its ceaseless inward questioning,
While past reproaching years like phantoms seem.
And still half doubting to his shrines he went
A sick and sad idolater — and there,
Unconscious yet, and fearfully he bent,
His lingering faith just swaying by a hair! —
O, might the chord give way before the Christian's prayer!

XX.

Thus in the leaping blood, and struggling gush
Of his stirr'd spirit, see him half subdued,
Who would not be entreated in the hush
And whisperings of his haunted solitude.
A Power is on him, from whose iron hand
The waken'd go not free. And that meek one,
Whose eye is deep'ning with a strange command,
Shall yet his path illumine like a sun,
Ere o'er that darken'd land his meteor race be run!

XXI.

And now the master to the guest made sign,
And bade him follow to his place of rest;
Where to his rude repast and welcome wine,
Himself the Pilgrim thankfully addrest; —
But ere he parted from his lingering host,
He spake so eloquent of Hope and Heaven,
That he who yesterday seem'd doom'd and lost,
Who with the coming truth, unbow'd, had striven,
Went forth an alter'd man — the proud one smote and riven!

XXII.

Time fled — and often to the secret cell
Of the Believer the Repentant came,
With anxious brow, to listen, or to tell
The story of his worship and his shame.
Then, as instruction, in the chasten'd voice
Of one who pleads, stole on his captive sense,
He would stand up, enfranchis'd, and rejoice
O'er the departure of some foul offence,
Before the Wanderer's large and living eloquence!

XXIII.

He listen'd, and he wept — the strong man wept!
The fount was touch'd at last — and from its deep
In reinless power the stifled waters leapt,
As by enchantment, from their leaden sleep.
Struck from their state, his idols in the dust
Buried their glory all — and his veil'd eyes
Turn'd from the offering of the things accurst,
Unto that noiseless, blessed sacrifice,
Whose incense leaves its shrine, unmingled, for the skies!

XXIV.

He listen'd, and he wept. — 'It was for thee,'
The Pilgrim cried — 'for thee, in chastisement,
The Lord of Light was bow'd on Calvary,
And thro' the world the trampling earthquake went,
Telling the tidings to the universe;
For thee — for thee — in bright example strove
With Death and Darkness — with the Cross and Curse! —
And now, as onward to the fight ye move,
Bring the heart's banner forth!—for Jesus or for Jove!'

XXV.

This said, the stranger to his bosom clasp'd
The cherish'd emblem of the agony —
While that frail crucifix the other grasp'd,
And thus in broken accents made reply:
'I tell thee, Christian, that my fate doth fall,
As it hath come in dreams — the night hath been
Full of prophetic voices, that were all
Echoing of *this* and thee! — but when, oh when
Shall Hope's blest halcyon light on Alban's heart again?'

XXVI.

It is a Sabbath eve. A mellow light
Is falling round the Wanderer's retreat,
And lo! his spirit on its bounding flight,
His lost — his beautiful — his God, to meet,
Fervent with freedom has gone out in prayer!
His hands in adjuration are abroad —
And Alban, as enchain'd, is lingering there!
The once idolater dethron'd and awed,
Under the still, o'er-shadowing Presence of the Lord!

XXVII.

He lean'd within the portal, and did gaze
Long and intense upon him — his bent head,
Tho' yet but in the spring time of his days
By sorrow's with'ring winter was o'erspread,
White with the snows of grief. Alas! for him,
If Hope's immortal dream had ended *here!*
If from life's low horizon, drear and dim,
She had not beckon'd to a better sphere —
A home of deeper rest — a land of nobler cheer!

XXVIII.

And as he listen'd to the gathering swell
Of supplication's sad and thrilling tone,
And saw the sweat that from a Pilgrim fell,
Wrestling with God for him — for *him* alone!
Slowly to dust his iron knees were bow'd,
And his heart answer'd to the Wanderer's call.
'I *am* thy brother, *now*' — he cried aloud —
(5) 'Thy Hope shall be my Hope — my life — my all —
Thy God shall be my God — with thee I stand or fall!'

XXIX.

The Pilgrim turn'd — the quivering Cross was rais'd
Above the prostrate and the Penitent —
And the low music of 'Thy name be prais'd,'
From his pale lips in smiles of glory went;
Then in one hallow'd brotherhood they knelt,
There, at one common footstool to outpour
One common tribute — while their spirits melt,
Until their thousand fountains have run o'er,
And to them comes a voice—'depart and sin no more!'

XXX.

O, the fast flush of joy! — Not he who dream'd
In holy Patmos, saw diviner things
Than round the twain — the rapt and the redeem'd,
Came thro' the vista of archangel's wings!
Heaven opens like the parted clouds at night
When the air teems with stars — and there comes on
Thro' the unveiling canopy of light,
The wavy anthem of the choiring throng,
O'er one who has repented — in uplifting song.

XXXI.

The angels' old rejoice! — which erst they sung
Over the opening glory of that hour,
When on their waiting gaze creation sprung
Forth to its orbit from the hand of Power;
When all the skies with answering music roll'd,
Heaving in billowy voice from world to world,
In rounding echo to the harps of gold!
When from the new-born earth young incense curl'd,
And broad, above its hills, the clouds were first unfurl'd!

XXXII.

And long sat Alban by the Pilgrim's side,
With fixed eye and all-devouring ear,
List'ning what crowns of recompense betide
The true in death and strong in virtue here;
A heart embolden'd for its heavenward march,
As by some mighty melody within!
The end, Eternity's triumphal arch,
And laurels which no toil of earth can win,
Untouch'd by blasting years, and all unstain'd by sin.

XXXIII.

'Christian — I march that way — the steep of Time!
But speed thy prayers for one so desolate,
For I have travell'd with colossal crime,
And with thy scorners and thy scoffers sate;
Yes — till thy startling accents round me fell,
Here, in my temple of idolatry,
I was the willing minister of hell —
Yet felt rebuke, at times, from yonder sky,
Breathing its deep reproach on one so lost as I!'

XXXIV.

Thus they outwatch'd the stars. There were no hours
To measure such communion — and behold!
Already herald morn is on the towers
Of the tall forest wood — the dim and old!
But hark! what sudden din is bursting round!
What hoarse rude voices on the listeners fall!
The noise of trampling feet — a crashing sound
Is rolling up thro' chamber and thro' hall,
And for the 'Christian dog' they loud and louder call!

XXXV.

A light on Alban's marble visage spread,
And white-lipp'd fear a moment mounted there;
Then o'er that cold complexion of the dead,
Shot the quick blood in one tumultuous flare.
'' 'Tis as I dreamt — thy hellish foes are near!
Christian — I know that vulture shriek too well —
They're here! — the persecuting fiends are here!
But that foul death on Alban's hearth befell
A Pilgrim of the Cross, no Heathen lip shall tell.'

XXXVI.

Firm as his everlasting Faith he stood —
That earth-forsaken man! his pallid brow
Bath'd in the risen morning as a flood,
Never so glorious and so calm as now!
'It is the trial hour,' he cried — 'and I
Am ready to be offer'd — lead the way —
I'll forth and meet them — for, 'tis but to die!
And oh! it seems but weary to delay,
When on my sight unbars this near Eternity!'

XXXVII.

Already to the threshold he had sprung,
With step undaunted, and with cross uprais'd;
But Alban forth his arm impatient flung,
While round the coming torches flash'd and blaz'd;
'Go not — I charge thee, Christian! — tarry not,
But follow with quick feet — 'tis not for thee
To pour thy blood on this polluted spot —
Doubt not — nor waver — wilt thou trust to me?'
Their hands have met; one look, and on their path
they flee!

XXXVIII.

Quick to a low-brow'd postern they had press'd,
That in the shadow of the morning lay,
Where Alban thus the Wanderer address'd;
'Now forth, thou way-worn man, and speed thy way,
Tempt not thy God — he calls, he calls thee hence —
Thy pilgrimage of duty is not o'er;
On, to thy ministry of penitence —
And for thy cassock-garb, take this — no more!
Thy holy heart full soon shall find a happier shore!'

XXXIX.

In haste his hair-cloth from his shoulders flung,
One glance that kindling eye on Alban bent;
'Brother, we meet again,' the quick words rung;
And on his sounding pathway swift he went,
Into the forest solitudes. But ere
Its deeps clos'd round him, that Repentant son,
With bounding step, and cheek unblench'd by fear,
His march of wo already had begun —
He stood, in his rude cloak, the revellers among!

XL.

'Ye seek the Christian — then behold him here!
Do with him as ye will, ye men of blood;
No time is this for pleading or for tear,
When foes are leaping round him like a flood!
Lead on to trial, death, it matters not —
My spirit is array'd!' — He ceas'd — and bow'd,
As one whose sorrow is in prayer forgot;
While madly round the hot pursuers crowd
And bear him from his hall with scoff and taunt aloud!

XLI.

Lo ! now, where seated with his sword and helm,
Under the arching oak's mysterious gloom,
The Heathen lord that rode and rul'd the realm —
Some charter'd tyrant of all-conquering Rome.
There Alban stands, with calm enduring eye,
Still as some marble of the earlier days ;
His temples gleaming in the morning sky,
And all his golden locks replete with rays,
Type of his martyr-crown of glory's quenchless blaze !

XLII.

Not long they bode in silence. 'Art thou he' —
The Roman cried — 'foul creature of our scorn,
And yet so hateful, that 'tis holy glee
And joy to hunt thee out with hound and horn !
Art thou the spirit that doth prowl the land
Of this green isle — and cast its altars down,
And dash the Roman Gods with impious hand —
Art thou the Christian ?' — and his bitter tone
Rung sharply as he rose with red indignant frown.

XLIII.

Quick answer came. 'I *am* that hated thing
Ye name in curses and pursue in blood ;
The strong defiance to your feet I fling —
I *am* a soldier of the living Lord !
And in his might I come. But him, the brave !'
And a new courage crown'd him as he spoke —
'Whose faith holds constant victory o'er his grave,
Ye find not here — the Heathen toils are broke,
And his deep voice, ere this, o'er other hearts hath woke.'

XLIV.

Triumphantly he stood. And as there went
Over their heated faces, like a shade,
Revenge and pallid rage together blent,
He saw the gathering tempest undismay'd.
'The Christian hath fled forth — and here I stand
In brotherhood of trial — let it fall,
I care not — for the world hath lost command
Of my last hopes — and sunken, one and all,
Earth's fears and flatteries alike, beyond recall!'

XLV.

The chief has risen from his sylvan throne
With judgment on his tongue — and his keen eye
Gleams the sure herald of that trumpet tone,
That bursts the shiv'ring lips of Heathenrie!
'Bear in the traitor — his own walls shall hear
The voice of abjuration — and a vow,
A vow to Jove! — or, by the Gods we fear,
Unto the bitter dust his head shall bow,
And pride's curst diadem depart that crowns it now!'

XLVI.

And Alban stands within the idol hall,
Where young Repentance found him. He has heard
A voice in stern command that bade him fall
Before the Roman marbles! — at the word
His willing knees already earthward bend;
His lock'd and quivering hands above his head;
And to the Christian's God his prayers ascend,
Mighty and masterless — as tho' outled
From his heart's sepulchre, a Presence from the dead!

XLVII.

'Twas the first prayer of tempted Faith. It rose
Serene and glorious, unappall'd, to Heaven,
In that resistless eloquence which goes
Up from the spirit when its founts are riven,
And an immortal courage closes round
Its all-illumin'd way. Silent they gaze,
And hear in silence, till a gath'ring sound
Sweeps from the bosom of that deep amaze,
And then from eye to eye the fires of phrenzy blaze!

XLVIII.

'Vile Christian slave! thou bear'st thy bravery well;
But thy last hour of mockery is o'er —
On then! and to the air thy marvels tell,
For cowl nor cassock shall protect thee more!
Green earth, and sun, and sea, look on them now
For the last time — and to thy boasted sky
Lift up again thy base apostate brow,
Ere, false one! all thy treasur'd moments fly,
And, for thy traitor faith, thou like a dog shalt die!'

XLIX.

Sudden abroad his arms did Alban cast —
Outspread as if in welcome — and his eye
Lighted with a strange lustre, but it past,
And his hands fell about him silently.
Once, his firm lips unclos'd — and a slow smile
Went over them, as some blest thought had flown
Into his heart, to shadow it awhile!
'In vain ye circle me with spear and frown,
Have I not ask'd for death! — life's glory hath gone down!'

L.

Thus went he to the struggle. It was noon,
Deep noon in forest bower and oaken glade,
When hidden brooks were at their 'quiet tune,'
And the great trees their far-off music made.
And there, in Nature's temple, stern and rude,
The Heathen feet did congregate, and there,
Guarded and bound the strong Believer stood,
With foot unsandall'd, and with temple bare,
And his flush'd face uprais'd, in high victorious prayer!

LI.

Near him a giant tree its branches spread —
England's old glory! — of its line the last;
Its iron trunk and arms all scath'd and dead,
And its leaves rattled to the rising blast.
Thither they bear him — victim of the Cross!
As mutter'd curses through their dim ranks run,
And furious, glancing arms they upward toss,
While the red torch is flaming to the sun,
Already veiling in, ere the dark deed be done!

LII.

For lo! the mustering clouds are rolling out
Their volumes to the zenith — and a light,
Wing'd courier of the thunder's distant shout,
Is blazing in that van of second night;
'Now, Christian — now! summon from yonder sky
Thy God, thy Christ, for on no mortal arm
Comes thy salvation.' — With a quenchless eye
He looks abroad, unconquerably calm,
While his drunk demons madden with a quick alarm.

LIII.

His hands are stretch'd in praise, and at a glance
From the fiend-leader, to that wither'd tree,
(6) Transfix'd, each struggles with a shivering lance —
And Alban bows him in his agony!
Swift on the faggot-pile the torch is wav'd,
And round his bosom leaps the living fire;
While the scarr'd oak that centuries has brav'd,
Smote by the bolt, now blazes like a pyre,
Mid lightning, storm, and earthquake bellowing deep and dire!

LIV.

Not yet, not yet the martyr dies. He sees
His triumph on its way. He hears the crash
Of the loud thunder round his enemies,
And dim, thro' tears of blood, he sees it dash
His dwelling and its idols. Joy to him!
The Lord, the Lord hath spoken from the sky!
And loftier glories on his eyeballs swim! —
He hears the trumpet of Eternity,
Calling his spirit home — a clarion voice on high!

LV.

Yet, yet one moment linger! Who are they
That sweep far off, along the quivering air!
It is God's bright, immortal company —
The martyr Pilgrim and his band are there!
Shadows with golden crowns, and sounding lyres,
And the white royal robes are issuing out,
And beckon upward thro' the wreathing fires,
The blazing pathway compassing about,
With radiant heads unveil'd, and anthem's joyful shout!

LVI.

He sees, he hears! upon his dying gaze,
Forth from the throng one bright-hair'd angel near,
Stoops his red pinion thro' the mantling blaze —
It is the Heaven-triumphing Wanderer!
'I come, *we meet again!*' — the martyr cries,
And smiles of deathless glory round him play —
Then on that flaming Cross he bows — and dies!
His ashes eddy on the sinking day,
While thro' the roaring oak his spirit wings its way!

NOTES.

(1) *But the confessional, where he shall tell*
Spain's monarch frailties o'er by lonely book and bell.

Stanza 32, lines 8 and 9.

The voluntary resignation of Charles V, who, as every body knows, 'cast crowns for rosaries away,' is a strong and mortifying instance of the power of the principle which is intended to be exhibited in these stanzas. If Remorse ever found difficulty of approach to the human heart, it must have been amidst the perpetual excitement and applause that wait on royalty, and through the pomp and circumstance of a throne. Yet the Emperor, says Hume, 'resigned to Philip,' 'and embarking on board a fleet, sailed to Spain, and took his journey to St Just, a monastery in Estramadura,' &c.

(2) *Before ill-starr'd Dunsinane's waving Wood —*

Stanza 33, line 4.

Great Birnam wood to high *Dunsinane* hill
Shall come against him — MACBETH.

(3) *Where the warm hermit held his fever'd reign —*

Stanza 39, line 4.

Who more decidedly than Peter of Amiens, answers that description of persons whom Lord Byron calls

——— '*the madmen who have made men mad*
By their contagion.' ———

(4) *As in the Roman's triumph-train of yore*
There went the Dacian slave, with galling chains bent o'er.
Stanza 41, lines 8 and 9.

Aut conjurato descendens Dacus ab Istro.
Virg. Georg.

The Dacians were subdued by and followed in the triumph of Trajan. The celebrated pillar that bears his name was erected in commemoration of his victories over that people.

(5) *Thy hope shall be my hope, my life, my all,*
Thy God shall be my God — with thee I stand or fall.
Stanza 76, lines 8 and 9.

This conversion, though apparently sudden, by no means stands alone. They were frequent, under the Roman emperors, during the persecutions of the Christians. We find the following, in the history of the Martyrs, during the reign of Severus: —

'Potamtena was tormented with boiling pitch poured upon her, and afterwards, with her mother Mersila, and Rhais, was burnt in the fire; and when Basilides, the captain, having the maid to execution, as he led her to the place, he repressed the raging of the multitude, who followed with reviling, which she seeing, prayed to the Lord for his conversion to the true faith; and so, with admirable patience suffered martyrdom.

Shortly after, Basilides being required to give an oath in behalf of his fellow soldiers, he denied the same plainly, affirming that he was a Christian, and therefore he could not swear; they who heard him thought he jested at first; — but when he constantly affirmed it, they had him before the judge, who committed him to custody. The Christians wondering at it, went to him, and inquired the cause of his conversion; he told them that Potamtena prayed for him, and so he saw a crown put upon his head — adding that it should not be long before he received it; and accordingly, the next day he was beheaded.'

Book of Martyrs, p. 120.

(6) *Transfix'd, each struggles with a shivering lance.*
Stanza 101, line 3.

In the time of Julian the Apostate, many martyrs were nailed to the trees — probably in the way of a rude crucifixion, and

perhaps in derision of that of our Saviour. Others were run through, clubbed, stoned, and tormented in every possible variety of manner. Eusebius tells us of many that were drowned — of others whose tongues were plucked out, and of some who were flayed.

During the persecution under Trajan, suffered Phocas, Bishop of Pontus, whom the emperor ordered to be thrown into a hot lime-kiln, and afterwards into a scalding bath, where he died. This was on account of his refusal to worship Neptune. At that time also, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch was seized and sent to Rome where he was destroyed by wild beasts. Thousands more were sufferers in like manner. Indeed the history of the time is full of horrible and unprecedented cruelties inflicted upon the early Christians. The reader will find a tedious and terrible catalogue in the account of the Martyrs of those days, and of succeeding periods.

THE LIGHT OF LETTERS.

Pronounced on the Anniversary of the Athenean Society of Bowdoin College, Sept. 1828.

Land of the godlike soul! from whose far shore
The voice of other times is heard once more,
Rising above thy shatter'd palaces,
And out of thy green isles, in loud lament,
As tho' a people, in its wo, had sent
Its farewell anthem o'er those classic seas —
Old land of Grecian glory! shall my lyre
Remain unswept, while every quivering wire
Shakes with the voice now bursting from thy waves,
And each stern summons from thy trampled graves!

O! not unheeded shall that summons fall,
And not unheard shall be that thunder call
On hearts, O land! that idolizing thee,
First taught the world the wonder to be free!
Not here, where altars rose in blood and fire,
And smok'd for Freedom, mid the hymning choir
Of her glad thousands, pouring on the air
The startling melody of song and prayer —
Not here, where that great drama rose on man,
That clos'd in glory what in tears began;

Where Empire sprang electric to the earth,
Like some bold being of immortal birth —
Not here, in vain, shall trumpet-throated fame
Sound the lov'd watchword of Athena's name;
Not here, insensate, shall a world behold
The land of light — the spirit's soil of gold,
Trampled by iron-sandall'd crime in dust,
Under the banners of a foe accurst;
The storied temples of another age,
Smote in the blindness of unsparing rage;
Piles, before which a wondering race was dumb,
Ras'd mid the brattling of barbaric drum!
For lo! already o'er a wide flush'd earth,
From holy altar, and the home of mirth,
Goes up a voice that bids the empires stay —
As when the earthquake's roar is on its way!
Already from the hill-tops of the land,
Warm'd into life, and woke to high command,
One wide hosanna breaks upon the sky,
For thee, O parent clime of bright ey'd Italy!
And now far up the ocean, bounding free,
Beyond the rocky pillars of the sea,
Sail the fair ships of charity — and brave,
But untried hearts are panting on the wave,
To greet the clime where giant souls are laid,
And win the glory of a new crusade!
Not more, when Europe's barks those billows rode,
And her mail'd princes on proud Salem strode,
Went prayer of kingdoms with the host of power,
To bless the struggle of that palmy hour.
For now a deep, majestic sympathy
Ascends like incense, on our kindling sky —

Not for some splendid pomp above a grave,
That high, romantic madness dream'd to save,
But for the loftier battle of the mind!
For life, for light — for freedom and mankind!
While, as each white-wing'd messenger departs,
Freighted with hope and mercy to the clime,
The adjurations of indignant hearts
Fall with our farewells on her track sublime!

And Greece, fair Greece! the beautiful and old!
Her's were the temples of the age of gold.
There, on the embers of her classic pyre,
Flash'd to new life the intellectual fire,
That, when their grandeur and their gods had flown,
Mid soaring Egypt and the East went down!
Aye — there the spirit with amazed eye,
Saw visions gathering in the earth and sky;
Mind, as to music, march'd her mountain way,
To grasp the glories of her upper day!
Science enraptur'd trod her echoing fane,
Leagu'd with her dim philosophy again;
Man, through the vista snatch'd diviner forms,
Seen as new star-beams through retiring storms;
And on the kindling morning of his soul,
Felt the new warmth of inspiration roll!

And thus the towers of once uplifted Rome
Caught the last lustre that surviv'd the doom
Of Athens and her palaces. Lo! there,
Though yet unwilling to unbind her hair,
Minerva beckons to the mental field,
Still bright and beautiful in helm and shield;

To the stern daring of that iron toil,
That waits on Learning's yet unconquer'd soil.
The light of letters on the unfolding years,
Like distant flashes seen through twilight's tears,
Came dim on Athens and the eternal hills!
The light that now like flooding sunshine fills
The wide glad lands, scarce waver'd to the air —
But then the fountain of the flame was there!
There Genius broke, in bolder forms to birth,
In works that woke, and then adorn'd the earth.
Against the heavens Olympian temples rose,
Over whose strength the tide of ages flows,
And yet, though scath'd, severe and lone they stand,
Guarded by Beauty's time-defying wand!
There startling Eloquence in light came forth,
Like the wild radiance of the arrowy North;
There bards their rude historic visions sung,
And Art, enamour'd, o'er her marble hung.

Time fled. The light of ancient days went down —
And lo! amid the jewels of her crown,
Scatter'd in dust, pale Learning stood in gloom,
Till rayless night clos'd round her, as a tomb;
And thus, her honour and her lustre furl'd,
She brooded in the shadow of the world.

Again the elements are stirr'd. Again
A ray is struggling up Time's turbid main,
Breaking the nations' midnight apathy,
As a dim beacon on a beamless sea,
Startles the mariner. Once more appears
A morrow to that day that sat in tears!

Science exalts her palmy head once more,
And Learning, girt with strange, fantastic lore!
Art, with her hundred hands, and mysteries,
Flies to her theatre in glad surprise;
While, mid the thunder of red-banner'd war,
Loud Minstrel-song uplifts itself from far!
Genius goes marshall'd by the lance and lyre,
To touch the spirit with her hallow'd fire;
Battle and Conquest, with their lightning sword,
Bare the blind dens where Ignorance ador'd,
Until the conquer'd and the conqueror
Bask in the kindling beams that round them pour.

And ask ye, now, if heaven-directed Mind
Drew curses deep, or blessings on mankind?
If Learning's broad, illuminated page,
Threw tints of beauty on the waking age?
Lo! then, the Light of Letters! — as the voice
Of the up-leaping year bids man rejoice
In city and in solitude, as out
Upon the melting hills he hears its shout,
In far glad welcome o'er old Winter's grave,
So came that light to quicken and to save!
Mercy and knowledge o'er the astonish'd land,
Sway'd hearts, alternate, with their mild command;
The crown, the cloister, and the sainted cowl,
Beneath which fester'd hopes and hatred foul,
Sunk in the footsteps of the magic power
Of Art and Letters, in that conquering hour.
Man's long relentless heart, grew kind again —
And the fine sympathies, that erst had lain

Like riven harp-strings, all anew were strung,
And each sweet chord to noble music rung!
The brave grew braver, and the savage fled,
An outcast from the living, to the dead:
The tender charities of prayers and tears,
That make life beautiful through joys and fears,
Once more, electric, sprang from every hearth,
And play'd in joyance o'er the thrilling earth —
While Superstition, with a withering brow,
Fled to the hopeless infamy that hides her now!

And now forgotten Italy revives!
The soul of her ancestral glory lives;
And on the ringing soil of knightly France
Comes in the fantasies of young Romance;
Love, faith, and chivalry, to high emprize,
Spring mid the radiance of imperial eyes;
The harper and the troubadour are there,
Singing of warrior bright and lady fair;
And in the strains of breathless poetry,
Rehearsing wonders of a world gone by;
Of mail'd magician in his rocky tower,
And Beauty, pining in her hopeless bower.
There Genius comes, too, with his wildering tale,
At which fair Truth, in blushes drops her veil,
And, hoping all things, Marvel's self grows pale!
The Drama, breaking from her mimic dreams,
Brightens, at length, with Nature's golden gleams —
And with a power and pathos all divine,
Glows in the touching fervour of Racine.
Above the cloudy Alps comes up the song
Of dark-hair'd Italy — another throng

Of gifted spirits issues on the shore
Where letter'd pilgrims linger to adore.
Petrarca pours his mellow strains around,
Where Love and Learning have one temple found;
And wild Boccacio, with his storied page,
Charms, shames, enlightens, and confounds his age!
Then through the gardens of romantic Spain,
Floats the high music of that land again,
Where iron Valour, in his shadowy plume,
Sung to rich Beauty, through the starry gloom,
Impassion'd tales of Moorish love and lore,
When her vast crown of power Grenada wore!
Where man all other chivalry outdid
And shone, in peerless light, the glory of the Cid!

But lo! the light speeds onward to the isle
Of our forefathers. There uplifts the pile,
Where Learning sits encompass'd like a queen,
With England's great and worthy round her seen.
Mind, with the energy that fate inspires,
And heaving, like the earth from hidden fires,
Comes forth in high revealings. The loud lyres,
That, when War's thunder rolled above their wires,
The blood-stain'd minstrel swept — the low, wild tone
That breath'd from lips of some sage Ercildoun (1) —
The banquet wassail and the bowery tale,
Have past into an echo. A faint wail,
As of far evening breezes — when they weep,
Comes o'er the valleys where the old bards sleep —
And such is all their memory! But now,
To nobler thought the world begins to bow,

And Learning beams anew from Bacon's brow!
The vision'd things of poetry arise,
And wide reflected from the magic skies
Of soaring Fancy, see the victory won,
While wondering Nature owns herself outdone!
Exulting Genius grasps her godlike birth,
And Shakspeare comes triumphant to the earth.

Not yet has man fulfill'd his destiny—
Not yet has come the splendor Time shall see;
But promise, like the bow, sits on the clouds
Now passing from the heavens—the rended shrouds
Of dark retreating error; and upsent
New light goes flashing thro' the firmament
Of high eternal Mind. The glowing march
Of Reason, as she mounts the splendent arch
Of the great system, in her panoply,
Heralds the brightness of the coming day;
Until, ascending in her path sublime,
O'er us she holds her fervid, festal time!
And, in its dazzling crown of beauty drest,
Ours, the deep noon of glory, shines confest!

Here, then, we pause. Back on the dreamy days
Of busied Art and Literature we gaze,
As on the sculptur'd beautiful. The past,
With time's dim witchery around it cast,
Steals on the sleepless memory. As when
At morn, or eve, or at its noon-tide swell,
Heaven's holy splendor through the Pantheon fell
On none but marbles of its godlike men, (2)

So recollection's mellow'd lustre falls
In quiet round antiquity. It calls
To bold relief the gifted and the good,
Who lone and unapproachable have stood
In virtue — that high valour of the heart —
Or strong in Genius, or unreach'd in Art;
It lingers sadly with the peerless dead,
In silent radiance round each sainted head.

So pass the days of eld. Astonish'd man
Hears, scarce believing, how they rose and ran!
The marvel of his destiny and life
Troubles his spirit with a ceaseless strife.
History itself is but a madman's tale —
Old visions struggling through tradition's veil;
Learning a sad, mysterious gift, that came
In subtile essence from some land of flame,
That all beyond his reason or his ken,
Confounds, amuses, and confounds again!
Yet man, that problem man, to Learning's well
Reverts in wonder, and adores its spell!

Lo! *now* the light of Letters! — The hush'd world
Sleeps in a moral beauty. Force, outhurl'd
Far from her godless throne, now dreams in dust,
O'er all that made her hated and accurst.
Free thought, upbearing on her eagle wings,
Soars to the country of diviner things;
And on the path of immortality,
Looks up and onward with a clearer eye!
Science has cast her stateliness away,
And strays mid flowers, and mingles with the gay;

To worms bequeaths her talismanic robe,
Whose volumes once portentous swept the globe;
And now discumber'd o'er the land she flies,
To win the humble and to charm the wise.
Art issues smiling from her dim retreat,
And haunts the places where the joyous meet;
Now in stern effort she uplifts her hand,
And now to strange creations waves her wand.
A hero, now, at her divine behest,
Steps forth sublimely from his marble rest;
And now, o'er all it ever dreamt or saw,
Some splendid plaything holds the world in awe!
On canvass now her quick enchantment glows,
And now in soul-absorbing music flows;
Now, like a vision, flashes from the scene,
And now abides in light, round Beauty's green!

So Art arrays her magic. And the deep
Lone fountains of the mind are broken up;
She leaves the vigils she was wont to keep
Over those bitter waters, for the cup
That nature proffers in the ecstasy
Of her mid festival. The earth and sky
Unveil to her their living poetry,
Mid mirth and music. In the freest range
Of uncheck'd gladness goes the spirit forth,
To converse with the consecrate and strange
And deep things of philosophy. The worth
Of the strong soul sounds not in monkish gloom,
But in its very triumph o'er the tomb!
In the hilarious tread that lights its way,
And makes e'en learning's deep devotion gay!

The age is full of music. Every ear
That God has tun'd to harmony, can hear
The cheerful melodies, as they up-rise,
In offering and thanksgiving! And our eyes
Can see the spiritual madness of the time,
Passing, like beacon fires, from clime to clime;
Beaming along each intellectual height,
In one perpetual sympathy of light.
It is the prime of Mind — the festive hour,
When she, mid her regalia, walks in power,
Reflecting broadly from her jewell'd crown,
On a glad earth the light of letters down.
O, well may man astonish'd gaze on man,
And lift himself in prophecy. The ban
Of Ignorance and Wo, at Freedom's charm,
Disolves in shadow — and the red right arm
Of that flush'd power, whose footsteps are on kings,
And tyranny, and crowns, in lightning flings
Unconq'rable abroad, and opens wide
A people's pathway — like a mountain tide!
For lo! upon the shaking hills appears
The sacred spirit of these wondrous years;
Nations, convulsive, leaping from their thrall,
Throw off their brooding bondage as a pall;
And in the echoing chorus of the Free
Send out loud voices o'er the Southern Sea! (3)

O, how inglorious seems the Prophet's sword;
How vain the ancient armies of the Lord!
The hope of Learning's light how madly vain,
Fed mid the silence of some cell profane,

To this unearthly conquest! The shrill cry
Of war's red-pinion'd angel hurrying by,
Proclaims no victory here. The flying shade
By old Oppression's hundred banners made,
Marks not the track of Mind; but on its path,
The frowning piles of Superstition's wrath,
Their festering halls and dungeons all forsook,
Tremble as at the earthquake's stern rebuke!
So be it to the last — and proudly hence,
Hail we the gathering empire of Intelligence!

And shall we dare to mount the fervid track
Of Genius, travelling, eagle-like, through rack
And sunlight, upwards to the cloudless bounds,
Where she may revel in new sight and sounds!
Ah! not to all, though wing'd for flight, is given
To reach the portals of the poet's heaven!
Far is the land, and unapproachable,
Save to the gifted, where the gifted dwell;
Where vision bares her mines of mystery,
To none save children of the dreamy eye.
Yet, joy to all the earth! though clouds surround
The far-off precincts of their hallow'd ground,
Tho' vain the efforts of the dull to rise
To the warm regions of this Paradise,
Still the sweet song of mingled voices steals
In tones of welcome from the blissful fields!
We hear a music welling from the fount
Of starry Genius — and our spirits mount
To meet it in mid air — we feel — we thrill
With the old inspirations, till they fill

Our hearts and eyes — and fancies wander by,
Such as alone are born of poetry!
Dark-brow'd Romance pours out her weeping strain,
And lo! we catch the wizard note again
Of a lost son of Erin (4) — and a shade
Of things unearthly, on our merriest mood
Passes like night — and on our solitude
The magic scenes, like spectres come array'd!
Then, straight outringing from the laughing spheres
Quick peals of merriment salute our ears;
Wit, like a wild bird with a glancing wing,
Descends in brilliance round us. Echoes ring,
Sent from a thousand hearts at once, in glee,
Responsive to the gladsome revelry!
There is no interval amid the sounds;
But, like the social music that surrounds
Our crowded hearths, delighted still they fall,
To joy awaking and uplifting all!
Such is the voice of Genius — that wild voice
At whose behest we tremble or rejoice,
As though its very accents were a spell
Of reachless power and beauty! O, 'tis well
To bow us with the priesthood of a shrine,
Whose splendid duties are so near divine;
'Tis well to gather where the great allure,
Their temple faultless, and the altar pure!
It is the noblest reverence of the soul,
Next to its God's, to own such high control;
'Tis well to listen to the winds and seas,
When the heart softens at their melodies!
O, well to listen to the voice of flowers,
When they all whisper of the withering hours,

And call us, in the sweet tones of a friend,
From life's best promise to its pulseless end!
Sure then the very homage were sublime
Of that unrivalled power that conquers time!
Sacred the silent tribute that we pay
To that fine spirit from the fount of day,
Whose presence is upon us, and around,
In one o'erteeming atmosphere of sound!

Then hail the golden years! — on us they roll
Laden with lore — the harvest of the soul.
Unhelm'd, and beautiful as Houris are,
In the full richness of her rose-crown'd hair,
Like some fair Mentor, ever at our sides,
And in perpetual song, Minerva glides!
No longer guards she in some pictur'd urn, [burn,'
Those sacred 'thoughts that breathe, and words that
But lo! in graceful smiles, and radiant mirth,
Unchains them, joyous, round each ringing hearth;
While, like a vision, to our hearts and homes,
In sure, but noiseless victory she comes,
Rob'd as the Goddess of the shield should be,
In maiden virtue, beautifully free!

And now what plaudit sounds are those that swell
With the glad clearness of a silver-bell
Up from delightful nations! Who is he
To whom this votive anthem of the free,
And brave, and generous, ascends, where'er
The heart has pulses, or the eye a tear —
Whose fame is seal'd forever! — Who is he
Whose wand o'er others holds high mastery,

And Nature in her power has visited,
As with the strange revealings of the dead?
Behold his name already on the roll
Of meteor minds — the wonderful in soul —
Stands forth, reveal'd in deathless characters
Upon the far futurity of stars!
His name, O Scotland! never shall expire, [pyre.
But soar, a second Shakspeare's — from his funeral

And he who died for Greece! What tongue shall tell
How mourn'd the Muses, when their Byron fell?
The isles sent up a wailing — long and wild,
Over the burial of their classic Childe,
And the whole world of poetry, in tears,
Wept for the minstrel, blasted in his years!
Yet not too soon he died. The holier light
Of poetry was setting in dull night
Upon his stricken spirit — and his name
Was hasting, scornful, to unenvied fame;
— But why rehearse the melancholy tale? [veil!
Peace to the noble dead! — their shroud is Glory's

Once more, O land of long unrivall'd Art,
The ships of Freedom for thy shores depart; (5)
And prayers are following out on every breeze,
From heaving millions to thy island seas!
Impassion'd Eloquence is loud for thee;
And mantling Genius, on her bended knee,
Smites her strong harp, and lifts her quivering hand
In adjuration for thy life, O Land!
The valiant and the beautiful go up
To listen to thy heralds. (6) The wine cup

Wreath'd with the graceful laurel, is pour'd out
In deep libation, mid the rocking shout
Of every people where high deeds are done,
For thee — thy Athens — and thy Parthenon!

And as our barks, their voyage of mercy o'er,
With glory freighted, seek their native shore,
So may the classic pilgrimage of Mind
One rich return of learned splendor find;
And the fine spirit leap its bounding sea
Laden with love and memory of Thee!

NOTES.

(1) *That breath'd from lips of some sage Ercildoun —*

The well known Thomas the Rhymer was called Thomas of Ercildoune. A capital and very graceful story of this ancient Minstrel is given us by Sir Walter Scott in his Work on Witchcraft and Demonology.

(2) *Heaven's holy splendor through the Pantheon fell*
On none but marbles of its godlike men.

The force of the illustration will be perceived, when the reader is reminded that the light which fell upon the statuary of the Pantheon was admitted through the roof of the building.

(3) *Send out loud voices o'er the Southern Sea.*

This was written while the struggle for freedom in South America excited great sympathy in this country.

(4) *Of a lost son of Erin.* — Maturin.

(5) *Once more, O land of long unrivall'd art,*
The ships of freedom for thy shores depart.

Provision ships were at this time sailing, or about sailing from the principal cities of the United States to carry 'aid and comfort' to the struggling Greeks.

(6) *To listen to thy heralds.*

Public discourses, I believe, were given by some of the gentlemen who had been successful Missionaries or partizans among the Greeks; and interesting accounts were thus had of that oppressed people and country.

DREAM OF THE SEA.

—— to tread the ooze of the salt deep.
TEMPEST.

I DREAMT that I went down into the sea,
Unpain'd amid the Waters — and a World
Of splendid wrecks, formless and numberless,
Broke on my vision. It did seem the skies
Were o'er me pure as infancy — yet waves
Did rattle round my head, and fill my ears,
Like the measureless roar of the far fight,
When Battle has set up her tempest shout!
I seem'd to breathe the air — and yet the sea
Kept dallying with my life, as I sunk down.
'Twas in the fitful fashion of a dream —
Water and Air — walking, and yet no earth;
The deep seem'd bare and dry; and yet I went
With a rude dashing round my reeking face,
Until my trembling and exploring feet
Stood still upon a bed of glittering pearls!
The hot sun was right over me — at noon —
Sudden it wither'd up the ocean — till
I seem'd amid a waste of shapeless clay.
A thousand bones were whitening in his rays,
Mass upon mass — confus'd — and without end!

I walked on the parch'd wilderness, and saw
The hopeless beauty of a lifeless world!
Wealth that once made some poor vain heart grow light,
And leap with it into the flood, was there,
Clutch'd in the last mad agony — and gold,
That makes of life a happiness and curse,
That vaunts on earth its brilliancy, lay here,
An outcast tyrant in his loneliness;
Beggar'd by jewels that ne'er shone thro' blood,
Upon the brow of kings! — Here there were all
The bright beginnings and the costly ends
Which envied man enjoys and expiates;
Splendor and death — silence, and human hopes;
Gems and smooth bones — life's pageantry! — the cross,
Once thought to save some wretch in his late need,
Hugg'd in its last idolatry — all — all
Lay here in deathly brotherhood — no breath,
No sympathy, no sound, no motion, and no hope!
I stood and listen'd —
The eternal flood rush'd to its desolate grave,
And I could hear above me all the waves
Go bellowing to their bounds! — still I strode on,
Journeying amid the brightest of earth's things,
Where yet was never life, nor sound, nor joy!
My eye could not but look, and my ear hear —
For now strange sights, and beautiful, and rare,
Seem'd order'd from the deep thro' the rich prism
Above me — and sounds undulated through
The surges, while my soul grew mad with visions.
Beneath the cloudy waters I could see
Palace and city crumbled — and the ships
Sunk in the engorging whirlpool, while the laugh

Of revel swept the ringing decks — and ere
The oath was strangled in men's swollen throats.
For there they lay — just hurried to one grave,
With horrible contortions and fixed eyes,
Waving among the cannon, as the surge
Did slowly lift them, and their streaming hair
Twining around the blades that were their pride.

And there were two, lock'd in each other's arms;
And they were lovers! —
O God! how beautiful! — laid cheek to cheek,
And heart to heart, upon that splendid deep,
A bridal bed of pearls! — a burial,
Worthy of two so young and innocent!
And they did seem to lie there, like two gems —
The fairest in the halls of ocean — both
Sepulchred in love — a tearless death — one look,
One wish — one smile — one mantle for their shroud —
One hope — one kiss — and that not yet quite cold!
How beautiful to die in such fidelity!
Ere yet the curse has ripen'd — or the heart
Begins to hope for death as for a joy,
And feels its streams grow thicker, till they cloy
With wishes that have sicken'd and grown old!
I saw their cheeks were pure and passionless,
And all their love had past into a smile,
And in that smile they died! —

Sudden a battle roll'd above my head,
And there came down a flash into the deep,
Illuming its dim chambers — and it pass'd.
The waters shudder'd, and a thousand sounds
Sung hellish echoes thro' the cavern'd waste.

The blast was screaming on the upper wave ;
And as I look'd above me, I could see
The ships go booming thro' the murky storm —
Sails rent — masts staggering — and a spectre crew ;
Blood mingled with the foam, bathing their bows ;
And I could hear their shrieks as they went on,
Crying of murder to their bloody foes !

A form shot downward to my very feet —
His hand still grasp'd the steel — and his red eye
Was full of curses, even in his death ;
And he had been flung into the abyss
By fellow men — before his heart was cold !

Again I stood beside the lovely pair ;
The storm and conflict had pass'd wildly on.
I stood—and shriek'd—and laugh'd—and yet no voice
That I could hear, came in my madness there !
It hardly seem'd that they were dead — so calm,
So beautiful ! — the sea-stars round them shone,
Like emblems of their souls — so cold and pure !
The bending grass wept silent over them,
Truer than any friend on earth — their tomb,
The jewelry of ocean, and their dirge,
The everlasting music of its roar !

I seem'd to stand, wretched in dreamy thought,
Cursing the constancy of human hearts
And vanity of human hopes — and felt
As I have felt on earth, in my sick hours,
How thankless was this legacy of breath
To those who know the wo of a scath'd brain !
O ocean ! ocean ! if thou coverest up

The ruins of a proud and broken soul,
And giv'st such peace and solitude as this,
Thy depths are heaven to man's ingratitude!

I seem'd to struggle in an agony!
My streaming tears gush'd out to meet the wave —
I woke in terror — and the beaded sweat
Cours'd down my temples like a very rain —
As tho' I had just issued from the sea!

THE VOICE OF THE SOUL.

The following thoughts were suggested by meeting, in a curious miscellany, with a singular instance of the power of conscience. The fact is strikingly simple — but it has something about it by no means unpoetical. It is related in the following words:

'What must have been the state of mind of Bessus, of Pelonia, in Greece, when he disclosed the following authenticated fact. His neighbours seeing him one day extremely earnest in pulling down some birds' nests, and passionately destroying the young, could not help taking notice of it, and upbraiding him with his ill-nature and cruelty to poor creatures, that, by nestling so near him, seemed to court his protection and hospitality. He replied that their voice was to him insupportable, as they never ceased twitting him with the murder of his father. This execrable crime had lain concealed many years — and had never been suspected. In all probability it would never have come to light, had not the avenging fury of Conscience drawn, by these extraordinary means, a public acknowledgment of it from the parricide's own mouth.'

Ay — thus doth sensitive conscience quicken thought,
Lending reproachful voices to a breeze,
Keen lightning to a look!———

Vespers of Palermo.

I.

Knell of departed years! — that with a start,
First fell on Eden's twain — when stricken man
Heard thro' his bower the coming Deity,
And in the moaning of the evening breeze,

Whose wings were wont his fever'd brow to fan,
Caught his stern whisper thro' the sighing trees,
And saw Hope's bow fade inward from the sky!
Thus broke the trembling hymn — ' 'Tis death to part
With beautiful creation in its morning,
When all the flowers are weeping in their dews,
And worse than death that sad-remember'd warning,
That turns to curses all the joys we lose!'

Ay — worse to that bright pair, as hand in hand
They pass'd the golden gates into the world,
Worse than the terrors of that flaming brand
That round the portals of their Eden whirl'd,
Was the wild memory of their Paradise!
For theirs had been a high inheritance,
And they, fair creatures of surpassing light,
Pure as the stars — and as the angels bright —
And lo! they forfeit all, by one rash glance
Into the buried future — and like Night,
Remorse sits brooding there — and glory flies!
So in the garden of the joyous earth,
Amid its early bloom and loveliness,
Where Majesty and Beauty first had birth,
First woke the voice of conscience — and not less,
Than when *their* quaking spirits heard its call,
As their forms crouch'd beneath that fiery wall,
Over our own the deep-tongu'd echo goes
As of a sound just utter'd! Wo to man!
It is the knell of ages. From the Fall,
Thro' all decaying time the note has ran,
The chain of Being o'er the accursed earth,
And dies not till the last unchangeable repose!

II.

Our eyes have linger'd on the child of fate,
Till tears did crowd them; and our looks have told
The tale of blest compassion. — All too late
Our pity comes for him, the dumb, grown old,
And he must feel his lot press darklier down
Upon his twilight soul for that kind look!
It tells of passages on life's bright page
Of which he recks not — dreams not — all unknown!
But he must turn unto the holy Book,
And walk in silentness his pilgrimage,
In awful converse with his God alone!
So there are lips seal'd to the doom of time —
And, as on beings in the unfathom'd sea,
So on th' insensate ear the thunder falls,
Unheeded, and the loud sharp cannon calls,
Unanswer'd, in that deadly apathy!
But lo! in what far age — beneath what clime
Has the broad mind been tenantless and still!
When has the bandless voice of conscience found
No echo in the soul! — when ceas'd to fill,
As with a thousand tongues all woke to sound,
The solitude that frights the guilty! — When,
In the dull hopelessness of every power
That can make mighty or illumine men,
Has the small voice that broke on Paradise,
And smote our common mother in her bower,
Once slumber'd with her children? Are our eyes
Lur'd by the sick'ning pageantry of earth?
Are we with music fill'd, or mad with mirth?
Is the heart sore with sorrow — or with crime?

Have those we lov'd and honour'd made their grave,
Going like early leaves in autumn time ?
Have spirits been extinguish'd we ador'd,
The lovely, and the splendid, and the brave ?
Have we with eloquence to rapture soar'd,
And felt the earth shake with a world's applause ?
Still this lone summons o'er the soul is poured,
And not the proud or strong can bid it pause !

III.

Our gaze may be upon him, in the day,
When man comes heralded from fight to fame,
Crown'd with the dying glory of a name !
Music shall wrap us into visions — joy
Shall sparkle like young fountains round our way ;
Grief shall corrode — and guilt that would destroy
Another Eden bower shall plot new crimes —
Still in such deep abandonment shall come
The hoarse accusing voice of other times,
Striking our pallid lips ' with terror dumb,'
Some sin unuttered — benefit forgot,
Some deed that hates the light, and struggles down,
Now cries to us in tones we cannot drown,
And bids us, while we smile, to curse our lot.
We may sit down with those that mourn — the dead,
The dying, young or old, in sobs and tears,
When those we lov'd, the beautiful, are fled,
And there is frequent wailing round their biers,
Then issue sudden to the glare of life,
Where man is at hard battle for his land,
And hear the trampling of the fervid strife
To win, at best, a perishing command !

Yet, at the bier-side the stern monitor,
Careless of death, uplifts her voice from far,
And like a trumpet blown in solitudes,
Is heard above the thunder of the war.
Thus counsels she with man in all his moods,
And with a noiseless eloquence commands,
Alike in silence and in tumult. High
Upon the top-towers of the soul she stands,
A proud, unchanging being of the sky!

IV.

Voice of the imprison'd spirit! that art heard
Upon our pillows in the hurtling night,
Like the far moan of winds — after the storm,
Summoning before the eye of crime the form,
The only one on earth to blast his sight,
And mocking with each slow and deadly word
The guilt that he would fly from — but cannot!
Voice of past years! — how dost thou spurn our will!
We hie us to the desert — the lone spot
Where silence becomes pain — intensely still!
And there thy haunting whisper moves the trees,
And speaks in every leaf — the twinkling breeze
Is full of thee — and steals like harsh rude sounds,
On ruin'd ears. There is no melody
In nature for the wretch who stalks her grounds
With a sear'd soul, and a mad, hurrying eye.
Kings have no solitude from thee — their walls
Are vocal as the cottage to the calls
Of this enthron'd divinity. Their crowns
Stay not the high rebuke and mutter'd doom
That steal like spectres on their hours of gloom,
Unaw'd by menace, and uncheck'd by frowns.

V.

Why start we at the feast, and bridal board,
Why utter sounds like madmen in the crowd,
If not the scarred heart is gall'd and gor'd
With memories that talk to us aloud,
And make the merriment around us seem
But the low murmuring of a babbled dream,
To the wild stormy sounds that seem to go
Over our hearts, burden'd with guilt and wo!

VI.

Dictator of our race! how rulest thou
In the bold felon's sad extremity—
When the death-dew is out — and his wet brow
Is struggling with the fate he may not fly!
Thou callest from the deep of his past days,
And with the clearness of a midnight bell,
Thou soundest thro' the darkness of his soul
A peal like that which on the Hebrew fell,
When Faith and Mercy had withdrawn their rays,
And his lost Saviour quaff'd the bitter bowl!

VII.

The heart grows weary, and life's self a bane,
When the last light of innocence is veil'd,
And, at our best estate, a fever'd train
Of rankling recollections mocks repose!
Vain are our bursting tears — our sins bewail'd,
Repentance cannot reach these hidden woes.
We live — the sufferers of our sad offence,
Hating the past, and dreading that to come,
Feeling for ay the wicked's recompense,
The undying worm, a mental martyrdom.

VIII.

The fated victim of the fabled hell,
O'er whom the vulture, dabbling at his meal,
Shriek'd at his still new plunder, pictures well
Red Conscience trampling upon tortur'd guilt.
Perchance some drops of holy blood he spilt,
Now fall like crushing mountains on his heart,
And urge the wretch, unquestion'd, to reveal
What else no power on earth could from his bosom part.

IX.

Not less the felon Greek, whose canker'd life
Sunk deep in torture, tho' conceal'd his crime,
Felt the resistless torment of the strife,
That, wo to him! was not to end with time.
He wander'd on his way, and frown'd on man —
Nature became a blank, her smile a curse;
Her fairest and her simplest things decay'd
From all their beauty. The wide joy they made
To all his fellows round, to him was worse
Than the most desolate misery. He 'gan
To feel the kindest sounds that fill'd the air
Were voices calling him to long despair!
Until the very music of the birds,
Those clear ton'd minstrels of the sky, that breathe
Like mercy to the thankful, seem'd but words
Discordant with deep accusation. He
Heard their wild carrolings within the wreath
Of his own cottage smoke, and mid the tree,
When all its foliage was still, they sung
The very notes of Heaven! But lo! his arm,

As tho' a knell of horror round him rung,
Crush'd the warm nestlings in their home of glee,
And the last warbler that around him clung
As for protection in the quick alarm,
He kill'd in its own melody. Behold!
How quick red Guilt's accusing tale is told!
'Cease your rude strains! ye sing death-songs to me—
Die! nor enkindle more my spirit's fire;
Your piercing notes like thrilling voices be,
That taunt me with the murder of my sire!'

Fool — fool! that wild confession seals thy fate.
The mystery unveils — the deed of years
Stares on a shrinking world! Not yet too late!
Man hears thee! Conscience from long slumber rears,
Betrays thee to thy doom, in those rash words,
And breathes thy sentence in the voice of birds!

THE REST OF EMPIRES:

Pronounced before the Peace Society of Maine, at Portland, on the night of its anniversary, May 10, 1826.

[It need hardly be said that War, treated with so free a spirit of reprobation on these pages, is to be considered entirely as an *offensive act.* The principle of self-preservation and defence is undoubtedly as reasonable and as sensible a principle when applied to a nation, as when applied to an individual; and defendants in such cases, whether made so by actual attack, or by encroachment on vital privileges, generally enlist our sympathies, as well as our sentiments of justice and right, on their side. Ambition, when referred to an empire, is rarely used in other than a bad sense — and enough of it has been seen in our day to excite something better and more effective, we hope, than poetic indignation, even the moral resentment of the world. Certainly the progress of free opinions seems to warrant this conclusion. As certain it is that few years have elapsed since 'Jugulantur homines, ne nihil agatur' seemed to be the motto over all the continent of Europe. But we have every reason for hoping, in our day, better things than the prospect of men killing one another for want of something else to do; and it is consoling to believe, that if we must have triumphs amongst us, they will be like that particular one instituted by the ancient Romans, for those of their generals who returned with victory, without the slaughter of men.]

I.

There is a kindling rapture round the heart,
When Fancy flings her broad untiring eye
Over the peaceful empires. Ye who love

To gaze on wonders ever unrevealed
E'en to your fathers fathers, tread with me
Yon cloudless heights where Contemplation dwells,
And ye shall revel mid a scene as fair,
As on the gifted eye of poetry
E'er rose to bless its visionary hours.
Look over a wide world! — Ye see the lands
Full of thanksgiving; and the burdened air
Comes laden with a silent incense up.
Ye see the lands where Mind has strewed her flowers,
Bloom like a garden in its glorious time,
And a hush'd breathing that ye scarce can hear,
Steals from the slumbering nations. Not a breath
Flies o'er the ocean of tranquillity, —
That far deep sea of Life, that late was heaved
Almost against the heavens, in the wrath,
And roar and tempest of distracting War,
Until the vilest things which dye its waves
Rode on its murky surface, and amazed,
And sickened all a withering world that saw
Its black and bitter waters! — But they fell;
And now, upon the tearful eye of Hope
They sleep, all calm, outstretched and beautiful,
In a prophetic stillness. Even there,
Where the last trumpet swelled its victory peal
Over the laurelled conqueror, and where
The last sad drama of Ambition closed
In night around the conquered — even there
The eye can catch a dark and dim train stretching
Up through the snowy deserts of the North —
The far procession of a people, bearing
The Monarch who once led them, (1) and whose crown

Shone like a pole star o'er their humble homes,
The beacon of a deathless servitude,
More unrelenting than its icy clime;
Him who in pride had led them — but whose clay
They follow now with dirge, and sable wo,
On to his wailing palace, — and his tomb.

II.

Look on this picture of the human heart!
Here, where the cities have scarce ceased to ring
To the loud conflict of a warring world,
The thunder-shock of millions — where no tears
Were ever shed thro' all those days of blood,
And where no human feeling wrung the soul,
Save that of fierceness o'er a trampled foe,
Here is the weeping funeral of a realm,
In loud lament over the little dust
Of majesty, decaying at its noon —
A valueless and solitary man!
Not over thousands that have died unwept,
Who boasted equal royalty within,
But the dull remnant of a crowned *one* —
Of *one* — a Monarch if ye will — but still a *man!*

III.

And who was he, beside whose gilded clay
Grief goes, herself attended like a King,
To pour her gorgeous sorrow on the ear!
He rose upon the world in promise — and
His course was with his fellows in the way
Of high, imperial honour: he went up,
And claimed renown upon the tented field,

And when the conqueror came thundering on,
He gave his very empire to the flames
To do the world a kindness. He o'ercame —
And leagued himself against the human Mind;
And in his day of Power enthroned himself,
The holy Arbiter of half the earth —
The sainted Father of a land of slaves.
He died upon the pillow of his friends,
And went in kingly splendour to his grave;
While He who was ambitious — that high one
Who was the King of battles — how died he!

IV.

Off where the seas look solitary — on
Those sharp black cliffs, whose desert columns seem
Tombs of a thousand sea kings — battlements
Girt with the sullen cannon, whose broad eye
Glares seaward from that wilderness of rock —
Off on those bristling summits at noon-day,
They gave earth's last Destroyer to the worms;
His life had been unrivalled — and his death
Unhonoured — distant — solitary — still.
He rose a lion on the paths of men,
And like a lion died in his own lair:
He had no friends — but worshippers — and some
Crept round him in extremity, as though,
When his great sun grew occident, to catch
The last rays of his setting. An armed world
Had driven him to exile. He had been
Walking mid thrones and palaces, as though
They had been dreams and dust — but which to win,
He gave his panting spirit to the winds,

And fought to madness — storming Heaven with crime!
At last he died — upon the pinnacle
Of desolation — prisoned and bereft.
He was not graved with conquerors — alone
As he had moved *on* earth, so *in* it now
He made his biding place. No monument
Channelled with tears was over him — no hearts
Were welling out their sorrows round his grave;
No pageantry or wonder — friends or foes —
The quick tramp of the sentinel — bright gun —
Shrill fife, and volley — and a monarch's clay
Claimed its low turf, and dull obscurity.

V.

Oh! the mind pants as on a toilsome way,
To follow memory back to such hard time.
How glorious to behold our happier days
Of intellectual power — our golden age
Of Reason's noblest and perfected sway:
There is a splendid strife upon the Earth;
The armies of the Mind are in the field,
And to the cause of Truth and Liberty
Move like a phalanx: and instead of War
And cities sacked, base conquest and the sword,
Ambition calls the spirit from its home,
Bidding its energies before mankind,
To do great battle for the coming years.
This is the mental chivalry, that looks
To lofty competition for its fame —
This is the War of Peace — that Holy War,
That fights for better things than Sepulchres,
And wins the moral victory. — O say,

Can aught but meek-eyed Peace give hope like this?
Turn in our glorious nature on itself,
And point to Faith the footsteps of the Heart!
Genius — and arts — and letters — they may go
On in their course of sunshine — while the earth
Is shaking with the warriors, and the tide
Of life is issuing at its noblest source.
The flashing circles and the glittering court
Of the great monarch of the iron crown,
Shone with the grace of literature and song,
And rung with all the revelry of wit,
While its gay armies moved to victory,
Through its long ranks of subject diadems.
But that divine philosophy was gone,
Which points to conquests won beyond the stars!
War troubleth not the rivers of the Mind —
But ah! it seals the fountains of the heart!

VI.

We have been taught in oracles of old,
Of the enskyed divinity of song;
That Poetry and Music, hand in hand,
Came in the light of Inspiration forth,
And claimed alliance with the rolling heavens.
And were those peerless Bards whose strains have come
In an undying echo to the world,
Whose numbers floated round the Grecian isles,
And made melodious all the hills of Rome,
Where they inspired! — alas, for Poetry!
That her great ministers in early time,
Sung for the brave alone — and bade the soul
Battle for Heaven in the ranks of War!

It was the treason of the godlike art
That pointed Glory to the shield and spear,
And left the heart to moulder in its mail!
It was the menial service of the Bard —
It was the basest bondage of his powers,
In later times to consecrate a feast,
And sing of gallantry in hall and bower
To courtly knights and ladies. It was sin,
For the immortal spirit of great song
To come and go before a lordling's frown,
And tune its harp in flattery of his pride.
Oh! there was fearful retribution there,
Upon the mountains of that warrior land, (2)
Where white-haired minstrels smote the chords of War
Until the vengeful sword around them fell;
E'en while their mingled chorus swelled the wind,
When in a wildered agony they struck
Their latest lyres upon the reeking hills!
Ah! too severe a fate for souls so high —
Too desolate a death for hearts like theirs!
They woke no heavenly strains along their halls,
To lull their leaders' stormy passions down;
But harping on the van, with sounding wires,
They sung of heroes, arms, and victory,
Until in wide and horrible recoil,
Fell vengeance came in lightning round their heads!

VII.

But other times have strung new lyres again,
And other music greets us. Poetry
Comes robed in smiles, and in low breathing sounds
Takes counsel like a friend in our still hours;

And points us to the stars — the waneless stars —
That whisper an hereafter to our souls.
It breathes upon our spirits a rich balm ;
And with its tender tones and melody,
Draws mercy from the warrior — and proclaims
A morn of bright and universal love
To those who journey with us through the vale ;
It points to moral greatness — deeds of mind,
And the high struggles, worthy of a man.
Have we no minstrels in our echoing halls,
No wild Cadwallon with his wilder strain
Pouring his war-songs upon helmed ears —
We have sounds stealing from the far retreats
Of the bright company of gifted men,
Who pour their mellow music round our age,
And point us to our duties and our hearts :
The poet's constellation beams around —
A pensive Cowper lives in all his lines,
And Milton hymns us on to Hope and Heaven !

VIII.

Oh ! could the Roman, when he cried for blood
And shouted war along his bleeding land,
Have looked with a prophetic vision down
The vista-path of ages, he had turned
Wearied and sickened with the sight of wo
That curse was lading on the wings of Time.
Well did God's royal minstrel bow himself
In tears and penitence before the Lord,
And choose, instead of crimson-bannered war,
A plague upon his people. (3) As he prayed,
Death's Shadow on his empire lowered, and night

Led on Destruction to its revelry —
But a bright morning broke above the tombs,
And health came riding on the vernal air.
So Nature rules in her sublime decrees:
In silence comes the pestilence — it walks forth,
And with a terrible but unseen hand
It tenants half the earth, while Man looks on
In pale and ghastly wonder at its power;
But when the Night of horror has pass'd o'er,
And gorged Contagion leaves its human wreck,
The world looks fair again — and all its flowers
Again come blossoming about the graves;
A melancholy calm is round the ruin,
And man grows better for his sadness. But,
When Battle mounts his horrid rattling car
And trumpet-breathing War goes madly forth
To make the empires wail, and thin the lands, —
When Man hath dealt his doom of Darkness out,
There comes no morning to a night like that.
No former light can beam on trodden hearts;
The victor lives in pride — and hates his slaves;
The conquered hate the victor and themselves.
There is no health in all their troubled souls;
The fire of passion has consumed their life,
And withered sympathy; and deep, and still,
The rankling poison of malevolence
Embitters Peace itself through all its years!

IX.

This is the curse of man's invention — this
The history of Ambition, and its close. —
Tell ye of murder when your fellow man

Crushing the little germs of conscience down,
Drags you to combat in the desert place,
With naught but skies and waves to witness it!
And do not empires murder, when their ranks
Are marshalled by Oppression — when their arms
Are crusted with the blood of slaughtered Free,
Devoted to the curse of Enemies!
Alas! for Man — whom calls he enemy!
Is it the spoiler of his snowy fame,
The seeker of his death — or gold, or power —
He who aloud proclaims his enmity,
And glares his hostile steel upon his life!
Or is it he whom God has made more blest, —
Happier in home, and richer in his soul —
He who offends the jaundiced eye of Hate,
And jealous rancor dedicates to scorn!

* * * * * *

XI.

There is a page of story, glittering o'er
With tales of prowess, and enduring toil —
The gathering of the valiant and the wise
Upon the spiry plains of Palestine.
We hear a music from the ancient time —
Voices and trumpets — and the tramp of steeds —
Songs of the holy zeal, and roundelays,
The hermit and the troubadour — we see
The turbaned crescent, and uplifted cross,
Sailing above the surges of the fight,
Around a lowly sepulchre — the grave,
Where the great Son retreated from the earth,
And died to give a lasting Peace to man.

Around that little garden, where his Light,
Smiled in its farewell, Mercy to the world!
Who dares to prate of man's consistency!
Fool! that would mar a spotless universe —
Wretch! that would battle with Eternity!
Contending with the everlasting God,
To summon Night and Chaos back again!
Who dares to prate of honour and a soul!
Has Man the right of these high attributes,
Which are the seals of Immortality! —
Follow him forth upon his pilgrimage,
And set down all his virtues in a book.

XII.

There is the wail of sorrow in his ear —
He gives the suppliant gold — perhaps his tears!
He sees the mourner in his solemn weeds;
He bends before his couch, a comforter:
He sees a sinking being in the tide,
Grasping in agony upon the air;
He hears his smothered cry — the strong man's cry
Rise like an infant's from the closing waves!
His startled spirit rushes to the flood,
And seconding his spirit, his nerved arm
Bears the poor victim to the weeping shore,
And gives him back to children and his friends.
Here is the impulse that ennobles him —
This is the image of Divinity! —
But lo! — again — at hoarse Ambition's call
He plants him in the iron ranks of War,
And ruled by one, whose idol is his sword,
He suffers that fine spirit that seemed born

To deeds all worthy of a martyr's crown,
To wreak red vengeance on the very head
He bore in rapture from the waves before!
He gives his lordly reason to the winds,
And turns life's sweetest fountains into gall;
And like a beast he tramples round the land,
The conscienceless automaton of power!

XIII.

Oh! how shall Man his crime extenuate!
What sees he in this brave o'er-arching sphere,
The rich domain of Nature, that will hold
A moment's friendship with his thankless heart!
He looks upon the wide and glowing earth
And hears the hum of bees — and sees its bloom
Rolling in all its luxury for him —
He sees the trees wave in the peaceful sky,
And dally with the breezes as they pass.
He sees the golden harvest stoop for him,
And feels a quietness on all the hills.
He looks upon the seasons, and they come
In beautiful succession out the heavens
With bud, and blossoming, and fruits, and snows —
There is no war among them — they pass on,
Light beaming from their footsteps as they go,
And with the cheerful voice of sympathy,
They give a melody to all the earth,
Each calling to the other through the year!
He looks upon the firmament — at night
There are a thousand lustres hanging there,
Mocking the splendours of Golconda — there,
He sees the glorious company of stars,

Journeying in peace and beauty through the deep,
Shining in praise forever! — They look down,
Each like a bright and calm Intelligence,
Above a sphere they all compassionate;
There is no war among these sparkling hosts —
They go in silence through the great profound,
Each on its way of glory — they proclaim
The order and magnificence of Him,
Who bade them roll in peace around his throne!

XIV.

Oh! when the planet shone o'er Bethlehem,
And light came round the shepherds on the hills,
And wise men rose in wonder from their dreams,
There came a voice sublime upon the winds,
Proclaiming Peace above a prostrate world!
The morning stars sang Peace — the sons of God
Struck all their heavenly lyres again, and Peace
Died in symphonious murmurs round the babe.
Thus broke Salvation's morning. But the day
Has heard new sounds; and dissonant and dire,
The mingled tumult swelled the coming storm,
Darkening its path with black portentous front,
Until it burst in havoc and in war!
Oh! may the fearful eventide of Time
Find Man upon the dust in penitence,
In the strong brotherhood of Peace and prayer.

XV.

There is a coming grave for all our frames;
Peace dwells there in that desolate decay,
And War stands palsied on its brink at last.
This is the end of boasting, pomp, and pride —

The stern alternative with art and us!
The temples and strong monuments of old
Stand in the peace of deserts, like ourselves,
When all the fairest and the bravest go
To slumber in the wilderness of graves.
Then is not Peace Mortality's stern fate —
The strong and deepened seal of Destiny,
The first and last which Nature stamps on Man!

XVI.

Not yet — not yet, the weary tale is told —
War entered fairer gardens than whilome
Was ravaged for the sepulchre — alas!
How the soul reddens with a rushing shame
To follow memory to the fields of Faith.
We stand in holy walls — the Place of Peace,
The consecrated temple of one God;
We stand in holy walls — the sainted place
Where Mercy met our fathers — and the light
Of pious men illumined all its shrine.
Yet in such walls as these arose a cry,
That called affrighted Christendom to arms.
Talk ye of Peace! who blew the trumpet blast,
And crowned the shaking Church with battlements,
And bathed their consecrated swords in blood
Vow'd to the God of Israel! — who but they
That called them brethren of the blessed hope,
And wrote them Christians on the roll of Heaven.
Talk ye of Peace! who bared the martyr's limbs
And flung him to the flames and howling dens,
Because his holiness outrivalled theirs!
Who but the sacred soldiers of the cross —

The mitred champions of the Holy Book!
Talk ye of Peace! Religion went in mail
And planted banners round the mystic board,
And made her very camp the Sanctuary;
She gloried in the whirlwind march of War,
And bared her white front to the crimson sky.
Oh! then thrice welcome Peace from such a storm,
Who could have hoped thy memory would survive!

XVII.

It is a glorious privilege for us
To come within the still and holy aisle,
And find no foe but conscience lingering there;
To make no sterner sacrifice than tears,
And seek no other blood, but that which saves.
These are the walls of Peace: to walls like these,
The stricken spoiler in his evening comes,
To listen and be merciful — he comes
To bend his iron nature to sweet sounds,
That, stealing from the fount of charity,
Speak of a coming and mysterious rest,
And breathe around him like a requiem.

XVIII.

And is there not one sanctifying hope,
To linger like an angel round the soul,
Through all the tempest of its trial, when,
Pure from this home of Peace it issues forth
To range the varied wilderness of life!
Lo! where the mother, veiling with her hair
The infant that she kneels to offer, comes
Up to the fountain of the peaceful wave,
And dedicates her morning sacrifice

To love, to blessed charity, and God.
Behold him from the mystic waters borne,
And bounding to existence — a brave boy,
The creature of her joy — her dawning pride,
He comes, at sacred intervals to bow
At the same shrine with her — a guileless heart;
Anon he seeks Life's mighty theatre,
And his young bosom pants through all its scenes.
Passion has claimed him, and the teeming strife
Of hurrying men has borne him to the midst
Of war's deep billowy waters — he looks back —
The fountain, and his mother — prayers of peace,
Float on the dim perspective of his soul,
Like sights and murmurs that come round our dreams.
He knows of no retreat — his years fly on —
And he has won the splendour of a name!
But lo! his pulses thicken — his fame's sun
Is sinking from meridian — and his arms
Hang weary on his scar'd and broken frame;
Ambition thinks of Judgment — memory
Once more is busy with his childhood, and
The fount he had been told of comes again —
The table — and the body — and then tears
Of gratitude are welling from his soul,
That he can come in his life's winter time,
And find still higher victory waits for him —
A victory in that high, unearthly cause,
To which his infant heart was consecrate!

XIX.

Why steal those sounds along the classic sea? (4)
Why mourneth Delphi round her hallowed steep?

And why around the grey Acropolis
Roll the loud peals of the barbarian drums,
Rousing fierce War? — Alas! 'tis not the strife
Of the armed maiden and the green sea-king
To give a name to Athens; not, alas,
The sacred competition of the gods
To give the noblest blessing to mankind;
But 'tis the ruthless cry of bearded men,
Who shout for Mahomet and Mecca — slaves,
Who with their flaming falchions would erase
The lingering glory of the Parthenon!
Why came such spirit to a land like this,
Where wisdom rear'd her temple and her throne?
Where learning walked her spirit-talking groves,
With port as beautiful, and chaste, and free,
And graceful as its marbles? Alas! here
Minerva called the olive from the hills, (5)
And won the triumph. Athens was her own;
She named the city of the starry minds, [peace.
And waved high o'er its towers the gilded wand of

XX.

Why came such spirit to a land like this?
Peace was the vestal's prayer — and vowed to her,
Peace was the earliest watchword round its walls!
The dark-eyed virgin flung her helmet down,
And in the luxury of her flowing hair
Called young Ambition to the bold pursuit
Of wisdom, and left war and shield behind.
'Twas not her palmiest pride to shine in arms,
And bind her beaming brow in steel. Oh no! —
Her glory was to light a waking world!

And in imperial Beauty to woo on
Her panting aspirants to virtuous fame.

XXI.

Yet has the olive withered on these hills,
And blood instead of bloom is on its wreaths.
Then ask you why this land is desolate,
And the green shores which haunt our classic dreams?
Ask why along the towering Andes yet
Steals the far murmur of the dying fight?
'Tis but an echo from the Isles of Greece;
The same unhallowed hands are on them both;
O'er both the same red spirit shakes its wings.
Here, it would quench young Freedom's bursting flame,
There, it would grind its glowing embers down!
Oh that the Goddess could but come again,
And as she *gave* it to a people, once,
Now, *save* the name of Athens, to the world!

XXII.

Once more look out upon the slumbering world.
It is a vision for no coming age;
The rainbow pillowed on the distant clouds
Lives but its hour, and fades along the sky.
The sun of Peace may sink — and night again
Fall heavily upon the people — now
Brightens the vision of philanthropy;
The noblest charities are clustering round
The altar of all Good, and forth, like stars,
The high affections move in harmony;
For thee — for thee, my Country, let there be
No morrow to this day — but let it last

As long as lake and mountain — sky and sea —
As long as virtue lingers on thy shores!
War has no fellowship with Thee — thou art
Upon that envied pinnacle of power,
Whence then canst gaze upon the elements,
And hear the fearful rushing of the strife,
Secure upon thy throne of adamant.
Thou art upon that envied pinnacle
From which, to grapple with rude force, thy form
Must bow itself, and shake its golden hair,
And scatter all its laurels in the dust.
Let others fight for pomps and triumphs still,
'Tis thine to guard the glory thou hast won!
War has no fellowship with Thee — behold,
God has put waters on the nations way —
And spoken in the voices of the waves,
'Divide, and be at peace!' — and before Thee
He rolls a wide, exhaustless ocean out,
That lifts its giant seas like barriers round,
Proclaiming in old Nature's eloquence,
They are the guardians of our Eden land!
War has no fellowship with Thee — thy boast
Is not the pride of common victories;
Thine is the silent march of Intellect,
The conquest of Intelligence; for Thee
Hope weaves her fairest visions; and to Thee
Peace turns her glorious eye, and sings her choral song.

XXIII.

Land of my heart! my song shall end with Thee.
Oh! may the ship that bears thy fortunes, still
Ride on the waves that gladden round her path,

With the strong arm of Concord at the helm;
And fear no wreck by trusting over much
To some o'erglorious weather, when a change,
An unseen change of pilots may drive on
The dim, dark shore of Discord and of Death.
Peace be within thy walls! — thy destiny
Points onward to a bright inheritance,
And far futurity, like golden bands
That stretch in light before a coming sun,
Glows on the wide horizon of thy years,
And kindles with new beams the sky of Time.
Peace be within thy walls — thy palaces
Shall be like this, the Temple where we stand.
Thy crown shall be thy virtue — and thy Fame
Shall be the tale which coming bards shall tell,
When bending o'er their loud, impassioned lyres,
They wake their chords to LIBERTY and THEE!
When they shall hear the whispering ages say,
Floating our morning benediction down
In the low voice of Echo to the world,
Land of the favoured Free, Peace be within thy walls!

NOTES.

(1) *The monarch who once led them, &c.*

ALEXANDER.

(2) *Upon the mountains of that warrior land.*

Through fear that the harps of the Bards might awake the spirit of Freedom in the hills of Wales, Edward I commenced an indiscriminate slaughter of the Minstrels.

(3) *A plague upon his people.*

The punishment of David for numbering his people. 2d *Samuel*, xxiv.

(4) *Why steal those sounds along the classic sea!*

It will be remembered that this was written before the struggle in Greece was determined.

(5) *Minerva call'd the olive from the hills.*

In contending for the privilege of naming Athens, Neptune summoned a horse to the earth, and Minerva, the Olive—but Jupiter decreed that the former was the emblem of War, and hardly so humane a gift to the world as that of Pallas, and so awarded her the enviable right.

THE CLOUDS.

I.

O CLOUDS! ye ancient messengers,
Old couriers of the sky,
Sweeping as in primæval years,
Yon still immensity!
In march how wildly beautiful
Along the deep ye tower;
Begirt as when from chaos dull
Ye loom'd in pride and power,
To crown creation's morning hour!

II.

Ye perish not, ye passing clouds!
But with the speed of time
Ye flit your shadowy shapes like shrouds
O'er each emerging clime;
And thus on broad and furlless wings
Ye float in light along,
Where every jewell'd planet sings
Its high eternal song
Over the path our friends have gone!

III.

Against that deep unpillar'd blue
Ye hold your journeying;
That silent birth-place of the dew,
Where life and lustre spring;
And then how goldenly ye shine
On your immortal way —
Sailing through realms so near divine
Under the fount of day!
O'er ye concenter'd glories play!

IV.

But when, to trail this sullen earth,
Ye stoop from higher air,
And the glad regions of your birth,
To sweep the mountains bare;
In dim, funereal pomp ye lower,
Oppressing like a pall —
Those brows of Beauty veil'd in power,
Whose shadows round us fall:
Ye brood like demons o'er the ball!

V.

So our life's hopes and promises
In dreamy distance lie —
So man a coming glory sees
Along his vision'd sky!
So as those rainbow joys come on,
Borne with his fleeting days,
That bright futurity is gone
And dullness dims his gaze —
Night gathers on his noon tide blaze.

VI.

Ye posters of the wakeless air,
How silently ye glide
Down the unfathom'd atmosphere,
That deep — deep azure tide!
And thus in giant pomp ye go,
On high and reachless range,
Above earth's gladness and its wo,
Thro' centuries of change;
Your destiny how lone and strange!

VII.

Ye bear the bow of Beauty, flung
On your triumphal path,
Splendid as first in joy it hung
O'er God's retiring wrath!
The Promise and the Covenant
Are written on your brow;
The mercy to the sinful sent
Is bending o'er them now!
Ye bear the memory of the Vow!

VIII.

Ye linger with the silver stars,
Ye pass before the sun;
Ye marshall elements to wars,
And when their roar is done,
Ye lift your volum'd robes in light
And wave them to the world,
Like victory-flags o'er scatter'd fight,
Brave banners all unfurl'd!
Still there — tho' rent and tempest-hurl'd!

IX.

Ye bear the living thunder out,
  Ye pageants of the sky!
Answering with trumpet's brattling shout
  The lightning's scorching eye.
Pale faces cluster under ye,
  Beneath your withering look —
And shaking hearts bow fearfully
  At your sublime rebuke!
Has man his mockery forsook!

X.

And then, in still and summer hours,
  When men sit weary down,
Ye come o'er heated fields and flowers,
  With shadowy pinions on;
Ye hover where the fervent earth
  A sadden'd silence fills,
And mourning o'er its stricken mirth,
  Ye weep along the hills;
Then how the waking landscape thrills!

XI.

And thus ye circle countless spheres,
  Old spirits of the skies —
The same, thro' nature's smiles and tears,
  Ye rose on Paradise!
I hear a voice from out your shrouds
  That tells me of decay;
For tho' ye stay not, hurtling clouds!
  Till the great gathering day,
Ye pass like life's dim dreams away!

THE HOST OF NIGHT.

At mihi jam puero cœlestia sacra placebant ——
OVID.

I.

Look at the host of night —
These silent stars !
What have they known of blight,
Or heard of wars !

II.

Were they not marshall'd there,
These fires sublime,
Gemming the midnight air
Ere earth knew time !

III.

Shine they for aught but earth,
These silent stars !
And when they sprung to birth,
Who broke the bars,

IV.

And let their radiance out,
To kindle space ?
When rang God's morning shout
O'er the glad race !

V.

Is this the splendid van
  Of Heaven's young light,
And has it just began
  To break on night!

VI.

Are they imbedded there,
  These silent stars!
Or do they circle air
  On brilliant cars!

VII.

Range they in frightful mirth
  Without a law —
Or stand they above earth,
  In changeless awe!

VIII.

Unfading things, impearl'd
  On Night's brow cool,
In mercy to the world,
  So beautiful!

IX.

Are they all desolate,
  These silent stars —
Hung in their spheres by fate
  Which nothing mars!

X.

Or are they guards of God —
Shining in prayer!
On the same bright path they've trod
Since light was there!

XI.

Is young life springing there,
Mid stars and dew;
Can Death, or Pain, or Care,
Float up the blue!

XII.

Or can thy searching eye
See naught that saves —
Is *there*, mortality,
And worms — and graves!

XIII.

Or is all — all we see —
These peerless gems,
The immortal jewelry
And diadems!

XIV.

Where is the tongue to tell
Of things like these!
All Earth — and Heaven — and Hell,
Are mysteries!

XV.

Curst man! — and hast *thou* pride,
That vauntest so?
By each thou art defied —
What dost thou know!

THE BUBBLE AND BALLOON.

I SLUMBER'D as the sun went down.
'Twas a rich summer evening, and the light
Lay pillow'd on the mountains and the clouds,
Unwilling to depart. But as it went,
And drew its radiance home from earth and heaven,
There was a sadness came around my thoughts,
Hallowing my visions. ——

I slept. But these ineffable bright hues
Were busy with my fancy. I dreamt. Off
In the warm ocean of the western sky,
I saw two beautiful strange orbs, that seem'd
To sail among the zephyrs, and to catch
The glories of the air in which they bath'd.
The one was delicate as thought — just seen,
Clear as the eyes of angels — and as fair!
And round its thin circumference there went
The shifting wonders of the rainbow — fire,
And sky, and ocean, landscape, men, and trees,
And blossoms, and gold fruits — crystals and gems —
Those thousand — thousand luxuries of light,
That play upon a bubble's gossamer,
And make that brilliant trifle of the earth,

The frailest and most lovely beneath Heaven!
The fairy creature roll'd along in joy!

Its fellow seem'd of different element.
It boasted no such glories in its course,
Miraculous transparencies, and change.
The dull light of departing day was all
That kiss'd its silken canopy, and gave
One solitary hue to all the sphere!

Wrapt in high wonder with these lustrous things,
What was their make, and where their journeying,
In such delightful company — and how
A very bubble should have liv'd so long,
To flaunt its splendors in the upper sky,
Were mysteries that press'd my fever'd brain!

Still flash'd those glories o'er that lesser globe,
Never the same — and still more beautiful
At every wing'd return! — hues that would make
The limner weep and wonder — so laid on,
By that sweet artist, Nature, as if all
The treasures of her beauties wanton'd there!

And now some daring being of the earth
Seem'd hanging to the other — buoy'd aloft,
And redd'ning in the sunbeams — stretching out
His little arms among the clouds, as glad
That he had soar'd so high above his kind!

Sudden a deathly change was on them both! —
Amid its pride and glitter, that thin sphere,
Riding beside the sun in pageantry,

Exploded on the air — and vanished!
And from the crimson clouds the proud balloon,
Headlong, precipitate to earth came down,
Dragging its master — shuddering, to death!

Panting I issued from my frenzied dream!
And bore it not a lesson to my soul!
How like a bubble is this gay-dress'd world,
To him who ponders on its shifting fate:
How wonderful it hangs in endless space,
Catching from this gold sun its countless hues,
And through the mysteries of the Infinite,
Playing before a witnessing universe,
The drama of its colours! — O, how fair
The tints of beauty glow upon its shell!
How generations of bright things come out,
And glitter on its surface, to grow dim
And fade before some other fantasy,
Of more complete enchantment! How it rolls
Its glancing splendors to the air, as tho'
Its hues should be eternal and unchang'd,
Until, in all its peerless promises,
When 't has outdone the rainbow in its pride,
It bursts amid its glory in the heavens,
And melts upon the element! ——

Are ye ambitious! look at that dim sphere
And him it has enthron'd. See ye there
Ambition and its creature. He has stepp'd
Into the car of greatness — and up-borne
By plaudits and vain-glory, sweeps away
Above the grosser regions of the world,

Into the sun-lit provinces of place,
Until his nature reels at his vast height!
He flings to earth those grave appendages
That weigh on rash impatience, and, buoy'd up
By godless, deadly attributes, he floats
In solitary power among the clouds.
But here are no companions — and the air
Falls chill and desolate around him, till
Grown desperate in his wildness, he forgets
The world below him, that the storms have veil'd,
And sees, above, the light for which he pants!
Ah! doom-devoted wretch! one effort more —
Higher or death! The bubble bursts, and down
Shrieking and mad, thro' clouds and wrecks of pride,
Dash'd to the hated earth he spurn'd before,
He lies a mangled corpse upon the hills!

FRAGMENT.

The year awakes in beauty! Lo! how still
The vapours linger on the wood-crown'd hill;
How like a dream the dewy morning breaks,
And o'er the East her golden tresses shakes;
How in the joy of her sweet heraldry,
She points her rosy footsteps up the sky!
And see! before her radiant-pinion'd way,
Planets retire, and glittering worlds obey!
The dim cold stars, their weary vigils o'er,
Down the lone vales their fading lustre pour,
Until, as if the coming pomp they knew,
They bury all their glories in the blue;
Dividing inward on their march of light,
To wait the splendor that has conquer'd night!

The clouds are leaving earth; behold them rise
Like loitering lovers, when, in sad surprise
Young light has broke upon their fond delay,
And morning shames them from their dreams away!
See how they lift them from her mountain breast,
To sail in beauty round their home of rest;
While the green summits bursting on the skies,
Catch the first greeting of those golden dyes;
Till, bath'd at last, in one warm flood of rays,
They issue, blushing, from the cold embrace!

The deep-hued air is motionless around,
Sea knows no heaving, and the earth no sound.
Ascending fragrance crowns each quivering hill,
The flowers breathe odour, and the dews stand still!
How eloquently deep such praises are!
The land an altar — and the offering there;
The Spirit's splendors with its powers unfurl'd,
While a calm incense steals from all the world!

Now is the joyous Sabbath of the year,
The worship of the seasons. Now appear
The roses, breaking in their rainbow pride,
With all the stirring beauties of a bride,
When first she bursts upon the ravish'd sight,
And scatters magic round her path of light!
The morn of roses! — glad and beautiful,
Lone wreaths are blooming round the grottoes cool,
And in sweet solitudes their peerless dyes
Glow deeper yet for wood-nymph's sacred eyes.
Here they unfold their wildering witchery,
Far in the bowers where Beauty loves to lie;
And tangling round her straying sandals there,
In flowery fetters hold the imprison'd fair,
And in the Eden luxury of bloom,
Woo her to slumber in the wild perfume.

O, that the year were one such noiseless time,
As this now lifting on the waken'd clime —
Summer and silence all the mellow'd hours,
An age of bloom, with worship of the flowers;
Bright rainbows clustering o'er Life's weary ways,
Like an undying beauty round our days.

THE RUINS OF BALBEC.

'Twas on the sunny plains of Palestine,
Leaning along those melancholy piles,
That point you to an empire's sepulchre,
I stood in the calm, sad days of the year,
When leaves come rustling down, and skies look cold.
I was alone — mid things inanimate ;
A wanderer around the wrecks of old —
My heart beat loud — but all the world was still !

Before me rose a Temple ; — its bald dome
Had crumbled and crush'd in — down to the dust,
Buried with all its gilded minarets,
Under the gauntlet hand of iron Time.
Against the eternal walls lean'd the tall shafts,
That erst stood throned upon their pedestals,
Clustering in rich and rare magnificence
Around the Cæsars who had triumphed there,
Now cast from their high places — broken, reft,
But clinging to those hoary walls, as tho'
They were too proud to fall ! — Like those high souls,
Whose living pillars have been cast away
From their deep base by some o'erwhelming wo,
Yet lean in broken grandeur round the ruin,
Too finely proud to sink while life remains ;
Revealing in the strong but shattered frame,
The work of *Mind* still braving thro' the storm !

But ah! what boasted muniments of man
Can battle with the ages! — Palaces,
And Temples that defied the living God
Have bow'd, and buried their vile idols up!
Yes — here the heathen's curse is verified —
How godless, yet how beautiful, that white shaft
That sinks its cleft base in the clear, dark pool,
And lifts its flowery capital above.
To gaze upon the wreck of sculptured worlds!
How rings the lesson thro' these solitudes!
Balbec, Damascus, and Jerusalem!
Thy marbles in the waters, and thy halls
Sunk in the ocean of returnless years!

* * * * * *

How dreamily those fair, pure pillars sleep
In the unruffled fountain, that looks back
With a sad truth, this desolate decay,
As tho' wild Nature, in her stilly place,
Would speak in terrors to aspiring art!
And here behold the column and the wreath
Heap'd in the sullen front of this dim pile —
Statue and marble architrave — and all
The chisels boast, and there the long sharp grass
Waving above the thunder-riven spoils!

I entered the old walls: the heathen Gods
Lay smitten to the ground — and every niche
Stared on the havoc which they could not save.
Above, the storms had roared and revelled on,
And yet the glorious work had warred with them,
And laugh'd at Time when he went thundering by
Upon his cloudy pinions. ——

——There were left
Six beautiful, lone pillars : they as yet
Look'd out upon the world, as they had done,
Upon the morning they were summoned there
From the red marble of the eternal hills,
And shook from pedestal to pediment
Before the shouts of Jewry ; strong they stood !
The sun was falling o'er the kindling sea,
And in the flashing of his purple light
They blaz'd upon that floor of centuries,
The tomb of a world's greatness ! — red and deep
They stood upon the blushing front of Heaven
Bathed in the splendor that had compassed them
Before the world was old. The dim, grey plain
Stretch'd hopelessly around me — and aloft
Libanus yet held farewell with the sun,
When night was gathering in her shadowy robes.
The harsh muezzin swung in the dim air
Its peal above the columns : then around
Stillness her marble empire held, for ay
As she will keep it, save when Echo calls
To Ruin murmuring round an empire's grave.

TO GABRIELLA R—— OF R——

Lady, tho' long to other lips than thine
My weary harp still echoless had lain,
Its music all departed, and its chords
As to this hour, unstrung — or feebly swept
By idle fingers, in a dull response
To a sick heart and frame — still, to thy voice
It shall once more awake — as silent strings
Move to a faint vibration, when a tone
Of sympathetic melody is pour'd
In a strange harmony from other wires.

Yet not like summer minstrel would I come
With roses round my lyre, and charter'd song,
To sport the bravery of a troubadour
Beneath some moonlight balcony, to thee.
Not to the chisel'd brow or dark deep eye
Where as in mirror of a shaded fount
Meet all the witcheries of woman — nay,
Not to the clustering beauty of thy hair
That veils thee like the night, come I to kneel
With wandering bard's devotion, there to vow
They are my first idolatry, then turn
And bruit it to the stars. O not to thee
Be that insensate homage — for my heart

Yields better worship at a noble shrine.
Still on my ear it falls — that gentle voice,
Bidding to inspiration. But alas!
Hast thou a hope to summon by thy spell
A poet spirit from the breezy North,
To bring thee music worthy of thy clime?
Hop'st thou, O southern maid, that one whose years
Have yet been pal'd with sorrow, tho' so few;
Whose heart by visitations has been bow'd,
Until rebound seem'd hopeless, and whose song
Above his harp has dull'd and died away
Into the prosing babble of a dream,
Can yet a tribute from his soul command
Worth the deep beauty that has asked the lay!

'Tis to thy spirit then I turn, bright girl!
With that I would commune, as with some star,
When night is at its noon — and whisper'd words
Come noiseless as our pulses. I would hold
A quiet way with thee into the world,
And tell thee now what may be told by years.
'Tis to a thought that flashing with thy eye,
Came vivid from thy lips when last I sate
In long communion with thee — that escape
From the heart's centre, when some magic word
Draws out the quick confession:

O, if hours
Could tell the tale of years, how quick the charm
Would touch the very fountains of our faith,
And change our young idolatry. Is it then
So glorious, all life's pageantry, to thee,

That the still paths of happiness, beset
With humble flowers that make it beautiful —
That wind by solitudes, or lead to homes
Less noisy than the Babels of the earth,
That guide your feet to bloom that nature made,
Or to the fire-side of the quiet roof,
That this untrampled pathway of our years
Cross'd by no heartless crowd that tires your way
And makes your wayfare weary — is but lone
To the o'erleaping spirit? Dark-eyed girl!
Thou art now in thy morning — and thy youth
Speaks in the leaping blood that rides thy pulse,
And plants its banner on thy cheek and brow.
Young light is in thy eye and on thy heart;
Thy days are but the dawnings of new hopes,
And thy nights full of beauty! But time — time,
That stern resolver of our warmest dreams,
Will mark thy life with passages of grief,
And deal thy portion to thee. The dim lights
Which man has set upon the way of life,
And call'd its pleasures, must, by fiat, fade,
And leave the beacon only that's within!
O then for quiet, and the meaner home
Where fashion reigns not, and the weary heart
Beats to but one, and answers pulse with pulse.
Then for the soul's own circle, never broken
By the rude foot that tramples on the flowers
Of all our best affections — in the maze,
Music, and flash, and madness of the world;
I have seen change — tho' youth is on my brow,
I have seen change. I've trod the glittering way
Of the loud throng — and liv'd in lighted halls,

Fate too has call'd me to another scene,
And time has brought its trial. I have pass'd
To life's extremest quiet, and laid down
In thankfulness of spirit that my heart
Found joy in that sweet silence. I have said,
Let the world heave on in its ocean-noise,
I ask but friends and home — and if to these
Heaven add the boon of love, my lot is full,
And rapture yet may light my pilgrimage!

Virginia, 1831.

THE BRIDAL.

Young Beauty at the altar! Oh! kneel down
All ye that come to gaze into her face,
And breathe low prayers for her. See at her side
Stand her pale parents in their latter days
Pondering that bitter word — the last farewell!
The father, with a mild but tearless eye —
The mother, with both eye and heart in tears!
He, with his iron nature just put off,
Comes from the mart of noisy men awhile,
To witness holier vows than bind the world,
And taste, once more, the fount of sympathy!
She from the secret chamber of her sighs,
The home of woman! — she has softly come
To stand beside her child — her only child —
And hear her pale-lipp'd promises. She comes
With hands laid meekly on her bosom — yet
With eye upraised, as tho' to catch one glance
Like that of childhood, from that pallid face
That hung for hours imploringly on hers
In the long, watchful years of trial. Now,
She would endure those cruel years again,
To take her as an infant back to arms
That shielded and encircled her — ere she

Had blossom'd into life. But lo! she stands
A plighted lovely creature at her side —
The child all lost in woman! The whole world
Contains for her, no glory, now, like that
That centres in her full and thrilling heart.
Her eye roves not — is fix'd not — but a deep
And lovely haze, as tho' she were in vision,
Has gathered on its dark transparency.
Her sight is on the future! — Clouds and dreams!
Her head is bent — and on her varying cheek
The beautiful shame flits by — as hurrying thoughts
Press out the blood from th' o'erteeming citadel.
Roses and buds are struggling thro' her hair,
That hangs like night upon her brow — and see!
Dew still is on their bloom! — Oh! emblem fair
Of pure luxuriant youth — ere yet the sun
Of toiling, heated life hath withered it,
And scatter'd all its fragrance to the winds.

And doth she tremble — this long cherish'd flower!
As friends come closer round her, and the voice
Of adjuration calls her from her dream!
Oh! wonder not that glowing youth like this,
To whom existence has been sunshine all,
A long, sweet dream of love — when on her ear
The tale of faith, of trial, and of death,
Sounds with a fearful music, should be dumb,
And quake before the altar! Wonder not
That her heart shakes alarmingly — for now
She listens to the vow, that, like a voice
From out of heaven at night, when it comes down
Upon our fever'd slumbers, steals on her

And calls to the recalless sacrifice!
Young maidens cluster round her; but she bows
Amid her bridal tears, and heeds them not.
Her thoughts are toss'd and troubled — like lone barks
Upon a tempest sea, when stars have set
Under the heaving waters: — she hears not
The very prayers that float up round her; but
Veiling her eyes, she gives her heart away,
Deaf to all sounds, but that low-voiced one
That love breathes through the temple of her soul!

Young Beauty at the altar! Ye may go
And rifle earth of all its loveliness,
And of all things created hither bring
The rosiest and richest — but, alas!
The world is all too poor to rival this!
Ye summon nothing from the place of dreams,
The orient realm of fancy, that can cope,
In all its passionate devotedness,
With this chaste, silent picture of the heart!
Youth, bud-encircled youth, and purity,
Yielding their bloom and fragrance up — in tears.

The promises have past. And welling now
Up from the lowly throng a faint far hymn
Breaks on the whispery silence — plaintively
Sweet voices mingling on the mellow notes,
Lift up the gathering melody, till all
Join in the lay to Jesus — all save they
Whose hearts are echoing still to other sounds,
The music of their vows!

SONG OF THE LAKERS.

Come, launch our brave boat
Out on the wild water,
Where the bugle's long note
Once summon'd to slaughter;
Where the blood of strong men once crimson'd it thro',
As though a red sunset blush'd over the blue!

Away to our ocean
Frown'd over by mountains,
Whose surge in its motion
Sweeps hard by its fountains;
Whose billows have mingled their voices sublime,
Midst the hills of our land since the morning of Time!

Come, for the deep night
Is gathering round,
And the stars break to light
Down the silent profound —
And their slender beams lie on the measureless main,
Like the bright silver links of a quivering chain.

Yet tho' buried the sun
In that echoless lake,
Its nightwaves, every one,
Shall to splendor awake —
For darkness itself sends a brilliancy forth,
And flings a new morn o'er the ice of the North!

Loud tempest in power
Leans out of his clouds —
And flashing seas tower
Like giants in shrouds,
While the thunder-shook cliff is rent to its home,
And ocean-rain bathes the deep forest in foam!

The shouts of the deep
Grow fierce in its wrath,
And hoarse voices sweep
From its dim cloudy path.
'Till in murmurs they break on some ocean-girt shore —
Sea answering sea in its sullen, long roar!

O! stretch to the gray rocks
Whose pinnacles frown'd,
And stood the war-shocks
Like sentinels round;
Which hung o'er the battle-ships shadowy track,
And the burst of their cannon in echoes sent back.

To the sun-greeting cliff
Where the warrior trod,
And at light moor'd his skiff
To ascend to his God —

On the rock that shall fail of his memory never,
Where the hand of rude art has instamp'd him forever!*

Then away to our ocean,
Whose ships trade in story,
And thro' its commotion
Sail freighted with glory;
Our forests wave ever bright flags to the breeze,
And the terror-beak'd eagle 's the bird of our seas!

Then away to your waters,
Away to your oars!
The dear blood that bought us
Shall hallow our shores.
And the storm-spirit sooner shall shriek o'er our graves,
Than our souls cease to sparkle when out on our waves!

* On the rocks bordering Lake Sebago, a beautiful sheet of water in Maine, are to be seen many specimens of the rude chiselling of the Indians. The portion of the cliffy shore that contains these memorials, is called '*The Images.*'

THE AIR VOYAGE:

A VISION.

Ye have heard of spirits that sail the air
Like birds that float over the mountains bare,
Upborne with pinions of beauty on,
When the farewell light of day is gone,
And they gladly soar to the blue away,
As to catch the stars' young travelling ray —
Till the arch of night
Is tremblingly bright,
As if meteors shot on their upward flight.

Ye have heard of spirits that sail away
To realms that glitter with endless day;
Where the clouds scarce lift their giant forms
In their far dim march to the land of storms;
Where the ocean of ether heaves around,
And silence and dew alone are found!
Where life is still
By a boundless will —
As a Sabbath around some echoless hill.

Methought I was swept thro' some measureless field,
Where the silver moon and the comet wheel'd;
With a glorious thrilling of joy I went,
And a tide of life thro' my heart was sent,

As though a new fountain had burst control,
And bore on its waters my panting soul —
And a shallop frail,
With a shadowy sail,
Hurried me on with the singing gale!

It went through my brain, this deep delight
With a kindling sense of sound and sight;
And it seem'd, as I rose, that the far blue air
Caught a hue of glory more richly rare,
Than was ever unfolded to earthly eyes,
The cold, cold lustre of uppermost skies!
And still my bark went
Through the firmament,
As a thing to the walls of the universe sent!

When the sun roll'd up from the burning sea,
Like a car of flame from immensity,
I felt his beams quiver along my frame,
When first o'er the clouds and stars they came;
And the light-dropping orbs I had slumber'd among,
Their dim, dewy eyes o'er creation flung,
As each beautiful ray
Sunk sadly away,
To the inner home of the high blue day!

Then I sail'd far off to the thunder clouds,
That loom'd on the air like spirits in shrouds —
My vessel, sunk on their fleecy pillow,
Seem'd a shadowy bark on a moveless billow —
And I floated through seas of vision'd things,
Where the waking breezes point their wings;

While far below,
Mid the lightning's glow,
I heard the dull sounds of the tempest go!

Then storm clouds cross'd my glowing track,
And launch'd me on through the hurrying rack,
Till a new creation seem'd to rise
In beauty all over the opening skies!
And the spirits that pass'd on the wings of night,
As they took their farewell feathery flight,
Pour'd melody out,
Like the far-off shout
Of Music that dies on its airy route!

LINES,

ON SEEING AN EAGLE PASS NEAR ME IN AUTUMN TWILIGHT.

I.

Sail on, thou lone imperial bird,
Of quenchless eye and tireless wing;
How is thy distant coming heard,
As the night-breezes round thee ring!
Thy course was 'gainst the burning sun,
In his extremest glory — how!
Is thy unequall'd daring done,
Thou stoop'st to earth so lowly now!

II.

Or hast thou left thy rocking dome,
Thy roaring crag, thy lightning pine,
To find some secret, meaner home,
Less stormy and unsafe than thine?
Else why thy dusky pinions bend,
So closely to this shadowy world,
And round thy searching glances send,
As wishing thy broad pens were furl'd!

III.

Yet lonely is thy shatter'd nest,
Thy aerie desolate tho' high;
And lonely thou, alike, at rest,
Or soaring in thy upper sky!

The golden light that bathes thy plumes,
On thine interminable flight,
Falls cheerless on earth's humblest tombs,
And makes the North's ice-mountains bright!

IV.

So come the eagle-hearted down —
So come the high and proud to earth,
When Life's night-gathering tempests frown
Over their glory and their mirth!
So quails the Mind's undying eye,
That bore unveil'd Fame's noontide sun,
So man seeks solitude to die,
His high place left, his triumphs done.

V.

So round the residence of Power
A cold and joyless lustre shines;
And on Life's pinnacles will lower
Clouds dark as bathe the eagle's pines;
But oh! the mellow light that pours
From God's pure throne — the light that saves!
It warms the spirit as it soars,
And sheds deep radiance round our graves!

DESTINY.

She walked among the great of earth,
And went in rich attire,
And spoke in gladsome tones of mirth,
Like music from a lyre.

She counted o'er a world of friends,
And thought them all sincere,
Sweet messengers which mercy sends
To reconcile us here.

She knew not of the weary hour
Which want has struggled thro';
Her way was bright with gold and power,
And luxury still new.

She had a smile for all the gay
Like sunshine from her heart:
And she never turned from grief away,
When her warm tears would start.

She never felt ashamed to weep,
Before the poor and lowly:
For she felt such blessed tears would keep
That young heart fresh and holy!

And so she went to sorrow's door,
And she stoop'd to hush its cry,
And pain itself knew evermore
When her angel step went by!

She glided thro' the mazy crowd
With music on her tongue;
And forth her silvery laugh went loud
And round and round it rung!

Then in sweet cadences they told
Love's witching tale by night;
Till her echoing bosom scarce control'd
The hurrying delight!

And many sought her, deem'd divine,
With many a practised wile;
And all, like pilgrims round the shrine
Stood waiting for her smile.

And life was hers, with wealth and joys,
Till life itself grew dreary —
And she felt of all its golden toys,
Her heart was getting weary.

Till at the altar's side she bent
To seal her vows to man,
And a beautiful pledge to her was sent,
And life again began!

A mother's hopes — a mother's fears,
  Are lighting up her days;
Her radiant smiles are turn'd to tears,
  Her laughter chang'd for praise!

But lo! a change is on her life!
  Her days of glory gone;
And over her babe the widowed wife
  Hangs weeping and forlorn.

Her young companions in the dust,
  Her best, her morning friends;
The youthful ones she loved at first,
  The last o'er whom she bends.

Her wealth is scattered to the wind —
  Her gold has purchased none
Whose heart would glory to be kind
  To such a cheerless one.

And vain are all the tears she shed
  O'er misery's simple tale —
There are none to glisten round her bed,
  Or wet her forehead pale.

Beauty and love, and all, are fled,
  All but her infant boy;
He stays, like hope around the dead,
  An unextinguished joy!

But soon that little flower must die,
Its early light be flown —
Lo *now* its spirit seeks the sky ;
The mother's is alone !

' Alone on earth ! — my child — my child !
I come to meet thee there !'
And she pressed him to her bosom wild,
And veiled him with her hair.

She looks into her infant's eye,
And a tear is in her own ;
She bows in that last bursting sigh —
Her heart is overthrown !

OCEAN MUSIC.

'O mare, O Litus, verum, secretumque Μουσείον, quam multa dictatis — quam multa invenitis !' PLINIUS.

COME, thou art of my spirit — sit with me,
And let me tell thee of a former time.

— Thou knowest there are things of harmony,
Unseen musicians of the air and wave,
That come and go upon the breathing winds,
And steal to meet you in deep solitudes ;
When you have put the world away, as if,
Into its grave — that you may be alone !
When to the ocean you have turned, to tell
Your sorrows to the seas — or to assuage
The heaving tumults of a tortured heart,
At that hard time when tears and thoughts of wo
Have flow'd upon it like a bitter stream,
That seems to heap its waters. — At such time
I went and sat upon the sullen rocks
That have been lashed for ages by the surge,
And smiled on too, for ages by the sky,
Yet looked the same thro' all ! Those old, dark rocks

Which we have loved to shout from, at the birds,
That flew there to the sunshine and the cliff.

I sat and gazed in wonder on the sea;
Pondering its vastness, power, and awful depth!
Its beauty, when in light it kissed the shore,
And terror in the storm when its wild arms
Smote in loud anger all it had caressed
In loveliness before. I thought of all
The wonder-wroughten splendors that were there,
Born on the bosom of that peerless deep,
Down the green tide, farther than thought could go;
And then my winged mind rose from the wave
Up to the Mighty and Ineffable
Who fashioned this sublimity. I thanked him
That he had given me soul to feel these things,
A heart to read his glories, and to say
Within itself '*these* shall not cease to be,
Tho' human love, and hope and life decay.'
I thanked him for the simple spirit, that
Saw good in all the clouds, and trees, and stars,
And heard a sacred music from a world
That looked a waste to others. I thanked him
That he had made me child-like, and had kept
Me so till I had come to my long years,
And had permitted my boy heart to go
In innocent rejoicing among the waves,
And feel that there was ecstasy in tears,
Shed, why, I knew not, when I heard the noise
Of the great sea sink moaning at my feet!

At such a time I listened on these rocks:
The sea was not in anger, but a smile
Was resting on it, as it heaved itself
In a sad swell upon the jutting crags.
And broke into a line of silvery foam,
Murmuring, and oft-times rising to a roar.
My soul was following out my idle eye,
That glanced from rock to some yet distant bark,
That seemed a dull ship painted on the sky;
And that strange lullaby was in my ear,
That comes not ever but in times like this,
When the intensest beating of the heart
Speaks audibly as conscience, and you hear
The voice of friends departed round your head.
I listened as the surge went back, and heard
The distant coming on of music — such
As I ne'er heard on earth; the far, faint choir,
Stealing symphonious on the wildered air,
Chord within chord, wrapt to its highest heaven!
Until the glorious harmony sunk down,
And seemed to die in the returning wave.

Then came the echo of one far, lone harp —
And straight a voice stole over it — and o'er that,
A shrill pipe blown upon the wind — that made
Still sweeter harmony. Then above all,
A melancholy horn was welling out
Its liquid melody, till all conjoined,
Voices, and organs, and wild instruments,
Came like the rolling thunder of a band —

So rich, so magic, and so beautiful,
I thought it was the green haired Naiades,
With all their sea shells up from ocean blown,
To pour one chorus on my ravished ear,
Then sink forever to their coral homes!

AN INVOCATION.

Come out of the sea, maiden,
Come out of the sea,
With thy green tresses laden
With jewels for me;
Out of the deep, where the sea-grass waves
Its plumage in silence o'er gems and graves.
Come out, for the moonlight
Is over the earth,
And all ocean is bright
With a beautiful birth.
The birth of ten thousand gleaming things,
Darting and dipping their silver wings!
Come out of the sea, maiden,
Come out of the sea,
With thy green tresses laden
With jewels for me.

Come up with your rosy syren horn,
From caves of melody,
Where the far down music of death is born,
O maiden of the sea!

Come, breathe to me tales of your coral halls,
Where the echo of tempest never falls ;
Where faces are veil'd
In a strange eclipse,
And voice never wail'd
From human lips ;
But a fathomless silence and glory sleep
Far under the swell of the booming deep!
Come out of the sea, maiden,
Come out of the sea,
With thy green tresses laden
With jewels for me.

Come forth and reveal
To my tranced eye
Where thy elf sisters steal
In their beauty by,
Like victors with watery flags unfurl'd
Mid the buried wealth of a plunder'd world ;
Where the sea-snakes glide
O'er monarchs drown'd,
With their skulls yet in pride
Of diamonds crown'd ;
Where the bones of a navy lie around,
Awaiting the last stern trumpet's sound.

O tell me if there
The uncoffin'd dead,
Who earth's beautiful were,
To their billowy bed,
Some cavern of pearls, are borne far in,
Where the spirits of Ocean their watch begin,

And their long hair, flung
O'er their bosoms white,
Is the shroud of the young,
The pale, and bright ;
And guarded for ages untouch'd they lie
In the gaze of the sea-maid's sleepless eye.

For, maiden, I've dream'd
Of long vigils kept
O'er lost ones who gleam'd
On our hearts ere they slept.
The visions of earth — too pure for decay,
In the silent, green ocean-halls treasur'd away ;
And there to her rest
A seraph went down,
With her warm heart press'd
To the heart she had won ;
Mid the shriek of the storm, and the thunder of waves,
Sea-maiden, she shot to thy echoless caves.

O come — I invoke thee,
From thy dim chambers hither —
Bear me under the sea,
Where white brows never wither ;
Lay me there, with my pale and beautiful dead,
With her wet hair sweeping about my head !
Come out of the sea, maiden,
Come out of the sea,
For my spirit is laden,
And pants to be free ;
I would pass from the storms of this sounding shore,
For the cloudless light of my years is o'er.

WHERE IS THE VOICE OF MIRTH!

I.

Where is the voice of mirth
That rung amid the bowers
Of the glorious sons of earth,
In their untainted hours!
When streamlets from the mountains,
In rural music ran,
And leapt the living fountains
To lave the lips of man?

II.

Alas! the rains of heaven
Fall thankless round the land —
And another Horeb riven
Might waste its waves in sand!
For children scorn to bow
Where their fathers knelt before,
And bath'd the weary brow —
At the leafy wells of yore.

III.

O who shall madness call
Those shadows of the mind
That round the purest fall,
Yet traceless as the wind!

On such a wreck we gaze
With tearful melting eyes,
And we stoop to guard the ways
Of the stricken of the skies!

IV.

But he who bares his brow
Unshrinking to the world,
And raises with a vow
And cursing lip upcurl'd,
That desolating bowl
Which fiends have drugg'd with hell,
And charges on his soul
That horrid hopeless spell;

V.

O who shall stretch for him
The quick protecting arm,
As for the mad and dim,
Fate's victims wild and warm!
The heart a lowly prayer
May whisper at his side,
But a withering shame is there
O'er nature's trampled pride.

VI.

Then think amid your mirth,
How glory may depart —
Of the strong man bow'd to earth —
The indurated heart!
Dash the red Syren cup
Of Ruin from thy lips,
Or night will mantle up
In the spirit's last eclipse!

THE HARPER'S SPELL.

I have somewhere read of a minstrel who was such a surpassing master of the lyre, that he once charmed a bird from the skies, until it fell and died upon his harp-strings.

I.

He swept it bravely! other hand
To feeble music woke the wires;
But his was o'er it like a wand,
Amid the rushing sound of lyres!
He loos'd the tangled harmony,
Till forth it floated free and high.

II.

At times the spirit bode on him
Like eaglet on his rocking nest,
When passion-storms pass'd loud and dim
About him in his troubled rest;
Then forth he look'd into the sky,
To hear the harping winds go by.

III.

It was fierce music when he came
In rushing tide of wrath and scorn,
When mantling with a crimson shame,
His deep indignant thoughts were born;
Then in curl'd lip and kindling look,
The world had read sublime rebuke.

IV.

And when the dream of nobler deeds,
Man's better glory stirr'd within,
How shook he back his pilgrim weeds,
And bar'd his hand so pale and thin,
To smite the chords triumphantly,
And scatter wonder round his way!

V.

Then might you see his quiv'ring brow
Change like the sunset as he sung,
Until its very pride did bow
To his own strings that round him rung —
And bent to music as a spell,
His own o'ermastering genius fell.

VI.

His lay was various as the voice
That waking Nature flings to air;
Tho' oft he fled from ruder joys —
No minstrel spirit linger'd there!
He lov'd old Night's deep anthem best,
When man hath enter'd to his rest.

VII.

Then listening to the silver call
Of the low winds that swept him by,
Or breath of far-off waterfall,
His ear grew mad with harmony —
And his soul ran wildering to a strain,
That other lyres essay'd in vain!

VIII.

And oft with measur'd tread he went,
As tho' a shadow cross'd his heart,
With frenzied eye, and forehead bent,
Into the Sabbath hills apart;
And there, by leafy fountain flung,
His wizard harp-strings faintly rung.

IX.

Once, when the year was in its noon,
And flowers and foliage bent to earth,
When streams were at their slumbery tune,
The minstrel to the woods went forth,
And there his magic lyre he swept,
Until his soul within him leapt.

X.

No song of bravery or love
Swells mid that temple of the trees;
His twinkling fingers idly rove,
Stirring low music like the breeze;
Yet passing, with a wondrous change,
Thro' all its wildest, dreamiest range.

XI.

The tinkling of some lone guitar,
In faint, mysterious, chiming wells,
With silver clarion blown from far,
And wavy beating of sweet bells —
Nature, enchanted to repose,
Leans raptur'd o'er each dying close.

XII.

And lo! a wild bird from the sky
Hangs o'er the harper in his might,
As o'er some serpent's glittering eye —
His plumage fluttering with delight;
Tho' death is in each trancing strain,
He would not soar from earth again.

XIII.

The minstrel's gaze is on him now —
Nature's last tribute he has won:
And a flush of pride is on his brow —
The imprison'd warbler is his own;
Across his lyre his pinions fall,
Burying the thrilling music all!

XIV.

As panting 'neath the fowler's dart,
To that mysterious song a prey,
He yields — until his little heart
Flooded with melody, gives way; —
Then clasps each warm wire with his wing,
And dies upon the echoing string.

April, 1830.

INNOCENCE.*

'The pure in heart.'

Emblem of purest light on earth!
In whom the beautiful has birth,
That with a silent power commands
The stern and sinful of all lands —
Type of the sainted and divine!
That first on Eden's bowers did shine
With the young morning of that day
So soon to pass in clouds away!
Sweet purity and love! — sleep on —
Not yet, not yet has glory from the dim earth gone!

Sleep mid thy forest leaves, fair boy —
The heavens hang over thee in joy,
And through thy shadowy solitude
Steals glaring by the horrid brood,
Whose roar has startled the lone night,
Turning the dream-flush'd slumberer white,
Now passing onward as in fear
Of youth so bright and brow so clear,
Laid in its wondrous beauty there,
Under the waving woods and dewy-scented air!

* An illustration of an engraving in the Token for 1830.

Sleep 'neath thy whispering canopy —
Thy infant look has hallow'd thee,
And thy untented head reposes
Mid noise of brooks and breath of roses,
'Neath desert crags with garlands grey,
Where wild birds wing their glancing way,
Secure, as if in guarded dome
Had been thy pillow and thy home —
As though a hundred heads were bent
Intense, o'er thee, less lovely and less innocent!

So go the beautiful in heart
From all the troubled world apart,
And mid the wild flowers and the voice
That make life's wilderness rejoice —
All bloom and music! — they lie down
With time's most enviable crown!
Kind spirits glance about their way,
And guard and glad each dreamy day;
Until the quiet and the pure
Pass to that better world whose glories shall endure!

LINES

TO 'SUB ROSA,'

ON HER PRESENTING ME SOME BEAUTIFUL STANZAS ON MOUNT AUBURN.

I.

Lady, if while that chord of thine,
So beautifully strung
To music that seem'd just divine,
Still sweetly round me rung,
I should essay a higher song
Than humblest minstrel may,
Shame o'er my lyre would breathe the wrong,
And lure my hand away.

II.

Forgive me then if I forbear,
Where thou hast done so well,
Nor o'er my harp strings idly dare
What I should feebly tell.
'Tis woman that alone can breathe
These holier fancies free —
Ah, then, be thine the fadeless wreath
I proudly yield to thee.

TO HELEN.

I.

Music came down from Heaven to thee,
A spirit of repose —
A fine, mysterious melody,
That ceaseless round thee flows ;
Should Joy's fast waves dash o'er thy soul,
In free and reckless throng,
What Music answers from the whole,
In thy resistless song !

II.

Oh ! Music came a boon to thee,
From yon harmonious spheres ;
An influence from eternity,
To charm us from our tears !
Should Grief's dim phantoms then conspire
To tread thy heart along,
Thou shalt but seize thy wavy lyre,
And whelm them all in song !

III.

Yes, thine 's a blest inheritance,
Since to thy lips 'tis given,
To lure from its long sorrows hence
The spirit pall'd and riven !

Go, unto none on earth but thee
  Such angel tones belong;
For thou wert born of melody,
  Thy soul was bath'd in song!

STANZAS

ON THE DEATH OF JULIA.

Come hither in the pale white moon, and stand
And lean upon her monument. The tale
That I would tell you is a tale of tears.
Come — 't is the night of mourning, and the stars
Look sorrowfully dim, as they did weep
Over the bitter memory of to-day,
That saw her glide, mid sobbings, to the tomb.
Come closer. Listen to the winds that sigh
Their anthem for the dead among the trees —
And see their branches fling athwart the sky,
Naked and shivering in the winter air.
Look down upon that grave. To-morrow's light
Shall see it buried in the wreathing snow!
So nature flings her purest robe o'er those
Who walk'd most beautiful amidst her flowers.
So should the snow-shroud be her dwelling place;
It is the home of such unsullied ones!
And hast thou known her in thy wild young years,
When health leap'd up into her countenance,
And sported, in her cheek — with buoyancy
And honest joy, as she went bounding forth
To bless creation in its blossoming!

There was a very music in her soul;
That kind of low-voic'd harmony, that wells
From the clear fountain of the spirit, when
It overflows, and pours along the heart.
O! I have listen'd to the artless tones
That came upon the ear of confidence,
Rich in their own simplicity, and heard
In all its proud, imperial dignity,
The story of her thoughts; and when there came
The fire of Heaven down into her mind,
And kindled up its altar — and the light
Illumin'd all her nature — till your gaze
Sunk in the halo that enshrin'd her form!

Her presence was a garden — and the air
Seem'd purer round you, as you stood by her;
And flowers, and all things bright encompass'd you,
Until you found it happiness to stay,
And felt it almost misery to part!
There was a freshness in her very words;
Something that was so new — so passing pure,
In all its sweet, unpractis'd singleness,
Rung musically forth, like the small shout
Of birds that shoot straight up into the blue,
When all the air is tenderness and dew!
There was a wreathing of kind words and looks,
Which your soul lov'd to help her spirit twine
Around your own, because it was a joy!
Her's was an infant one, array'd in smiles,
And fresh with fascination, all her own!

She was too bright, too lovely for this earth,
And went away the purer in her morn.
For there's a blighting chilliness comes on,
Even upon the noon-time of our years.
Death lov'd to linger with so bright a prize,
And wooed her out of being. You might see
How his red hand had circled round her cheek
In beautiful destruction! — and it came —
She died. Her soul went up on music, and
Our hot tears now congeal upon her tomb!

THE DEAD.

Una tamen spes est, quæ me soletur in istis;
Hæc fore morte meâ non diuturna mala.

Ovid. Trist.

I.

Ye dead, ye dead — why come ye so
Like shadows round my head,
Stealing with step so dim and slow,
And such a noiseless tread!
Ye come like dreams of buried years,
Not veil'd in frowns, but bright in tears!

II.

The night is bowing round the world;
My spirit is alone!
And have ye all your shrouds unfurl'd,
And your dark kingdom flown,
Souls of the glorious and high!
To breathe on one so sunk as I?

III.

Then come, ye visions of the grave,
I welcome ye to earth,
I see ye rise from land and wave,
As summon'd to new birth!
I see ye come, a glimmering band,
Like stars before night's ebon wand!

IV.

Shadows of beauty! I have dream'd
Of glory pass'd away
To realms where all its brightness seem'd
Lost in one golden day!
The glory of some holy one,
Who shone, on earth, my spirit's sun!

V.

Shadows of beauty! do *ye* dwell
In such high company —
Where Heaven's unbounded arches swell,
Where 'tis unknown to die!
Live ye, emancipated there,
Semblance of all on earth ye were!

VI.

O, do these robes that round me sail,
These shadowy robes of air,
The same pure forms of beauty veil,
That gladden'd life's wayfare!
Do ye united wing the skies,
In shapes once light of mortal eyes!

VII.

Spirits of loveliness! — are ye
  Before the Old in Days,
Permitted in those courts to see
  Life's lov'd ones bend in praise!
Meet ye those idols purified,
For whom, on earth, ye wept — and died?

VIII.

O! if to pilgrim man 'twere given,
  To meet in yonder sky
His friends, devote to God and Heaven,
  It were but bliss to die!
What joy to tread those fields for ay,
In such a deathless company!

IX.

To sweep the golden harps — to rise
  Upon the eternal lyre,
With melody that never dies,
  From the white-rob'd angel choir!
To pour the soul in one glad song,
That echoing ages shall prolong!

X.

Then welcome — ye long buried forms,
  Ye beautiful of old!
Your voice my stirring spirit warms
  Into far dreams untold.
New life, new life! is breaking there,
Deep in yon sparkling realms of air!

XI.

I fear ye not — I fear ye not,
Dim shadows of the grave,
Revoking years I had forgot
From Time's relentless wave!
Ye tell me we shall meet again,
Where comes nor Sorrow, blight, or pain!

THE MAN OF SORROWS.

'And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the Sea — Peace, be still.'

He sleeps — and round the plunging bark
The billows boom and roar,
While from the night-clouds wild and dark,
The storms relentless pour.

He sleeps ; and round his hallow'd head
The undying glory plays ;
And pale and peaceful as the dead,
That brow of wonder lays !

Pale as some marble brow it seems,
Translucent with command,
As thro' the glooming storm it beams
Amid that lowly band.

He sleeps — the Saviour of the world,
Beneath the fisher's sail !
While on the rattling tempest hurl'd,
His followers round him wail.

Cowering they gaze upon the main,
In terror on the sky;
Till Faith is turn'd to Fear again,
And Hope stands plum'd to fly!

Trembling they kneel around the Lord,
In wildering agony;
And send one desolate glance abroad
Over that lashing sea.

They cast them at the unsandall'd feet
Of that unearthly king —
And farewell hands about him meet,
And tones of horror ring!

They call on Jesus from the deep
Of their extremest wo;
They break, they burst the bands of sleep;
Why should he slumber so!

They rouse him with a wild delight;
Thus breaks the fearful spell!
'Save us! O Lord of life and light —
Save us! Immanuel!

The man of sorrows hears their cries,
And round his stately form,
While still new kindling glories rise,
He thus commands the storm.

'Peace, peace, be still!' — and lo! the waves
Sunk all their battle noise,
Stand still above their ocean-graves,
At that immortal voice!

That lifted hand — that radiant eye,
How powerful and bright!
Commanding all that sea and sky,
In their unrivall'd might!

Just Jesus! o'er my troubled heart
Thus let thy mandate roll,
And thus bid frowning storms depart,
The billows of my soul!

THE TWO LAST GRAVE DIGGERS:

A VISION.

SCENE. *The Sea Shore. Two old men between two newly dug graves.*

1*st G. D.* Fair welcome brother!
2*d G. D.* And as fair to you.

1*st G. D.* Thus to the confines of the earth we've come,
Fulfilling our kind office to the last;
How little thanks we've had from friends or foes
For giving them to nature!

2*d G. D.* Thanks indeed!
'Tis a most melancholy duty; why,
We well deserve the thanks of all the dead,
And should have monuments. We've done for kings
And fools one office. 'Twere a grateful one,
Methinks, to give them decently to dust,
And cheat the vultures. —

1st G. D. Nay, we have done good;
Our's have been lives of high benevolence,
And a most feeling charity. — But see!
Mortality has chok'd up the earth — and here,
Upon the sand, the shore of ocean, we
Have two graves left, scoop'd with our own old hands,
Where we perchance must rest. Yes, all the earth
Is one wide sepulchre — a charnel-house,
Fill'd up with bones of a past world.

2d G. D. Ay — we
Are left the last the sun will shine upon,
And my old spirit takes its joyaunce now,
To think we'll sleep by this loud-roaring sea,
Whose arms have snatched so many from our grasp,
And feel no fear from its voracity!
We are the last! for as upon the graves
I made my slow way hither, I beheld,
Pale as the white surf that did lave their feet,
Two desolate, still beings — bending down
To meet the waters, the last twain of earth!
The remnant of God's creatures! On their lips
The words of love were dying, and their eyes
Held that last converse, such as I have seen
Between two souls, affianced against fate,
When these old cheeks were red, and my blood hot.
They went together to these noisy waves,
And throwing back one look on the still world,
Shot into the billows — and thus they died!

1st G. D. 'Twas a most excellent sight, i 'faith, to see
Our ancient enemy lash his loud ire,

As tho' he would contend with two old men
For the last victims of mortality !
They have wide graves — these oceans, and their maws
Seem but half satiate with creation's death ;
But all reproach is over — for the waves
Of Time fling out their dusky arms for us,
And soon will gather us to those dim homes
We've built and fled from. —

O, in my first days,
When I began this delving of the dust,
I do remember great funereal times ;
When Famine walk'd the land, and black disease
Came in the plague-spot and the fever. Then
I was a smileless child, that knew no joy
Save that which grew from death and loneliness.
I do remember gorgeous burials —
When splendid Penitence in weeds came forth,
Following the train of greatness, in whose end
Warning and grief were mingled, and whose grave
Was wet with tears of royalty. I've seen
Diamonds and crowns laid down with aged heads,
Without a question why the tribute was,
Or why it was so stern. Kings in their robes
Have bow'd upon my threshold, and, with rags,
Have sought their common company, the worm.

Once, in the days of olden glory, I
Discharg'd these sullen mysteries o'er one,
Whose shrouding was an honour. Some bold arm
Had struck him from his mighty place — his throne —
When power and bravery compass'd him. At once
He made a breach in nature, and dismiss'd

Earth's highest spirit to its lowest place.
And when the day of his entombing came,
There was wide weeping. Round the pompous bier
Near friends came bending, in their low lament,
Hiding their faces in the pall. Their tears
Were full of sorrow — from the heart — and roll'd
Silent and big along their blanched cheeks.
Then thousands came with dry and stony eyes,
To gaze and wonder; they could scarce believe
That one who master'd all their lives and hopes,
Could cease to be so suddenly. They thought
That he who warr'd with empires and the seas,
Would war with dissolution for long time,
Nor vanish like a meteor down the night.
They wonder'd and pass'd on. The higher ones,
Those who wore robes, and mov'd in offices,
Came stately round the dead, and look'd on him,
To whose persuasion they had listen'd, as
To some sweet song that pleas'd; they knew not why;
To whose command they bent them, as the stars,
Obeying an Intelligence they fear'd.
Women and men and infants, hover'd there,
With whisperings — and low prattle — and keen eyes,
Discoursing the sad matter. In the squares,
And crowded ways, the people hurried on,
Gesticulating, in deep intercourse —
Calling on all the gods at once, to know
How this might bode the Commonwealth — and then,
With brow contract, shaking their wilder'd heads,
And muttering at the mystery. One lean man,
Alone, and in a dreary place, stood up
And gave his thanks to Jove for this high death!

No one beheld him, save myself — and when
The wailing troop came sweeping by the spot,
He fled affrighted. E'en the elements
Lent their loud sympathy to valiant men,
In this sublime eruption of their grief!
The sky scowl'd leaden over them — and loud
The storms went roaring thro' the Roman streets,
And the rains beat upon the sepulchre.
Strange sounds were going on the heavy air,
And prodigies were painted on the clouds.
The soothsayers were at loss, and faintly said
The world had got beside itself. But when
I came to give the body to the dust,
The trouble of the heavens was almost drown'd
In that which broke aloud from riven hearts —
The tempest of their woes! There you might hear
Wild mourning from a host — grieving the air
Along the dim procession, when they knew
Dampness and bones were now the heritage
Of one they lov'd and trembled at. And he,
Whose path had been on monarchies and crowns,
Who thought the earth too poor for his regard,
Sought refuge in it — thro' these wither'd hands! —
— I dug the grave of Cæsar! ——
Yet hear on —
In later times I've dug some humbler graves.
A good man made his peace with God — and died:
They said his last hour was his brightest; for
He murmur'd hymns, and pass'd away in smiles.
The calm and holy came around his bier,
And Resignation, with clasp'd hands, look'd on,
Then rais'd her unregarding eyes to Heaven,

And follow'd to the cypress. Simple — low
Was the rude sepulchre I fashion'd; but
O'er it the great in soul did congregate,
The heirs of life eternal — the high hearts
That toil, thro' dust, the pilgrimage of God,
To win that large inheritance which Christ
Has promis'd to the faithful. Here was not
That Heaven-insulting pomp that decorates
The tombing of the proud ones; as tho' noise
And glittering wo — and music — and rich shrouds,
Could frighten the poor grave-worm from its prey!
This was Religion's pageantry; and this
The tribute at a Christian's burial-place!

2d G. D. How better was it than his fellow's? — One
Who laugh'd at Providence, and saw no God
In earth or stars — or felt him in his soul.
I knew him. In his life he walk'd alone,
Deem'd by the world a madman or a fool,
Because his faith ran counter to their fears.
In death I knew him; ay, in that hard hour
That brings us to the quick alternative,
His brow was firm as marble, and as smooth;
His spirit was unstirr'd — and when one said
'There is a God above us!' he did frown,
And shook his head, and curl'd his whiten'd lip,
And died — as died the echo of the words!
Him I did marshall to his narrow home.
'Twas in the dead time of the year, at night —
Midnight o'er half the world. No sullen bell
Gave token of his passage — and no friends
Came on the heels of the dim hearse — not e'en

Under the cloak of darkness dar'd they come
To follow such a fatalist to hell!
He had no mourners, and no tears — all men
Had clos'd their doors — and the long streets were still!
I had been told to hurry him to earth.
'As he has liv'd,' they said, 'in darkness here,
In darkness be he cover'd.' It was done.
The dogs were baying deeply at the clouds,
As the last turf was flung upon the pile
That mark'd the Atheist's tomb. Yet what to him,
Your Christian man, more than to him who doubts,
Is the cold honor paid at death's dark door
Over decay'd mortality! Both sleep
In iron slumber that recks not the roar
Of cannon's voice or earthquake. And what then
Shall whispers and sad sobbings waken here!
Both have began their journey through the vale —
And for your saint and pagan, of the two
I could not name the better!

1*st G. D.* Impious wretch!
Shaking thy fleshless bones upon the brink
Of that eternity thou sneerest at,
Durst thou provoke its certainty! Take that —
And see where chance will land thee!
[*Strikes him down with his mattock.*

2*d G. D.* Ah! blood, blood!
Old man, our fates are one; the curse, the curse
Is on thee for this murder! You grow pale;
Death has us both — there — there — [*Dies.*

SHE SLEEPS AMONG HER CHILDREN.

Away; we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress.
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?

HEB. MEL.

SHE sleeps among her children—in the lone
And desolate place of old and broken tombs,
Close at the side of those on whom she smil'd,
And nurs'd, and pray'd for, in their morning hours!
Their fair white monuments look down on her,
And, at this dim and melancholy time,
When night is veiling in th' uncivil world,
Seem like pure spirits round their mother's form,
As though their blessed souls, revisiting
Their wasted bodies had come down at eve
To welcome her to that cold place of rest,
Where nature loves to meet with nature still
In her poor sympathy:—As though they came
To herald her to heaven; wafting up
To those eternal shores where all is peace,
And pain that drown'd our very life in tears,
And wrung the heart, till it almost forgot
To love, hope, fear, so great its agony,
Can never come, to break the bright repose!

She sleeps among her children. She had been
A lovely mother to them; and their eyes
Were ever on her in their childish days,
Catching the beauty of her character,
As it was shadow'd out upon her life.
And as they grew, she foster'd in their souls
Those germs of love that only languish here,
And, born for God, can only flower in Heaven!
She travell'd in the narrow way for them,
And when the skies, and blossoms, and fair hills
Broke round and o'er them, and their hopes began
To make her journey joyful, they were chang'd!
And sicken'd, as though longing for the realms
That Christ, in mercy, had unveil'd to them!
She watch'd beside them till their hearts were still —
Before her God, in tears, for such an end!
And then rose up, in thankfulness of wo
That they had all gone smiling to their homes!

O God! how beautiful they were! too much
Of Immortality about them, to
Be nam'd with, or compar'd with baser earth,
And yet so full of fellowship with us,
So full of kindness, and high love, and joy,
That he had scarcely seem'd a Christian man
Whose silent prayer had been to keep them here.

She sleeps among her children. She had sat
And seen them pass before her — to the dust!
Each lapp'd in peace so wonderful! — But now,
As though her heart had borne no trial yet;
As though her faith knew not the promises;

As though her soul were not emancipate
From the cold, cheerless comfortings of earth,
But shrouded up in wishes of this world,
Came fell disease, with her whole troop of fiends,
Until, it seem'd, such was her agony,
High Heaven had rain'd all misery upon her!

Her spirit soar'd above the restless waves!
Crown'd with the beacon of her Faith, it seem'd
A rock not made of perishable things,
Unshaken and sublime amid the storm!
She went in to her pillow — silently!
And on it talk'd of God, and things to come
With such delighted, fearful certainty,
That the heart quak'd to hear her, and would melt
Into the bitter tears of guilty grief!

To her, how beautiful Eternity came on!
Undying glory lit her dying smile,
And her white hands wav'd welcome to the day!
She saw the blood and body — and she pass'd
On to her God, calm, purified, forgiven!

She sleeps among her children. Clustering round
Their graves look holy in the twilight. There
They sleep the pulseless sleep till time is o'er!
They are but cold companions now; but years
In the swift lapse of which that hour will be —
For Heaven has said it — shall bring on the morn,
When they shall burst together on the air,
And mingle with the stars!

BAND OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

I.

Band of the beautiful — who bow
About Jehovah's throne,
My spirit comes to join ye now,
Ye will not me disown. —
Come with your clustering wings around
And shadow in my head,
And hallow this devoted ground,
Ye dim and sainted dead!

II.

O by our ties of time and earth,
And by the love ye bore
In years before your heavenly birth,
Or the golden crowns ye wore,
Bend round my scath'd and bleeding path,
And whisper to my soul
That God will not remember wrath,
But dash this bitter bowl. —

III.

That Mercy like a sunbeam yet
Shall struggle thro' your shrouds,
And the day still have a glorious set,
Tho' early veil'd in clouds;

That Hope shall spring up with the flowers
In silence round your tomb,
Peace blend with all the coming hours,
And all the past illume!

IV.

O! for your voices! let me hear
Your music come again,
Like harpings on my opening ear —
Nor let me list in vain!
Pour your immortal melody
Around the pilgrim's heart,
And lift his footsteps on his way,
And a voice to him impart!

V.

The earth has faded. I am left
An exile mid its way —
Hopeless of joy — forlorn — bereft,
To tread its cold decay;
I feel the rush of other years
Come on me like a tide —
But ah! the story of my tears —
Ye lov'd me — and ye died!

VI.

O could I calmly have lain down
And droop'd and died for ye,
Or if ye must — *must* still have flown,
Join'd in your agony;
How joyous should I then have gone
Forth from this house of clay,
To greet the everlasting morn
In your bright company!

VII.

Whose lot so deeply desolate
As his, who, left behind,
Sees nothing here that bids him wait
Amid Life's storm and wind!
Vain! vain! — earth's star of Hope is set —
I wander on in sin;
O, to the realms where they have met,
Just Jesus bear me in!

STANZAS TO ONE BEREFT.

I.

The heart that has not known the hour
When Grief could bid it bow,
Or *seen* that looks and words have power
To wring the brightest brow,
'Twere vain to torture with a song
So sorrowful as mine;
Leave such to pant amid the throng
That crowd its gilded shrine.

II.

But ye that suffer — who have felt
The destiny of earth,
That Death, with shadowy hand hath dealt
Rebuke amid your mirth;
To you *this* tribute of a word,
When other sounds have fled,
Will come like lov'd tones, faintly heard —
The Memory of the Dead.

A NIGHT THOUGHT.

I.

The day was passing to its rest —
  Earth's shadows had departed,
And light came forth the bold and blest,
  And low the broken-hearted.
The trees were still to the very leaf,
  And stood in silent sadness,
While on the evening sounds of grief
  Stole up with notes of gladness.

II.

I thought upon the early dead,
  The beautiful and lowly,
Who in the dew of Youth had fled
  To find a home more holy;
Who from this green and scented earth
  In glorious bloom were taken,
Leaving the spots of former mirth,
  Like blasted bowers forsaken.

III.

Some stainless-brow'd, some hallow'd one —
  The light of long past days,
Whose lovely lustre shone upon
  Our lone and weary ways;

The creature of our hopes and tears —
With whom we wept and pray'd —
Enchanting all our warmer years,
As through life's flowers we stray'd.

IV.

O when such sainted ones are gone,
The world is but a grave,
And we the mourners, wild and wan,
That round its ashes rave.
Man and his pomp — what baubles now!
The wealth of globes how vain!
When we in lone soul-sickness bow
Where such poor dust is lain!

V.

How kind their memory comes down,
When all the earth is sleeping,
And stricken youth whose hope has flown
Sits in the pale light weeping!
I thought, as still the night grew deep,
How much of human Sorrow,
Did every heart such vigils keep,
Would lose its pang to-morrow!

VI.

Silence and stars! — and silver clouds
Veiling the solemn moon!
And then how teeming memory crowds
On midnight's sullen noon!
It is the sacred hour of thought,
The melancholy hour,
When to the bow'd hush'd heart is brought
God's splendor and his power.

VII.

Then go, when night is on the world,
And bend thy pride in prayer;
Look on its canopy unfurl'd
And read thy lesson there!
Read there are graspless things beyond
Earth's saddest mysteries,
Known only when the spirit's bound
Is wider than the skies.

VIII.

Then ask ye for the early dead,
The beautiful and young,
Whose step bore music in its tread,
Whose voices round us rung?
Ask ye for light of other days
That beam'd from glorious eyes,
And lips that mov'd with ours in praise —
The soul's last sacrifice!

IX.

Go — seek the pathway of the clouds,
Go — ask the weltering sea
To render from their coral shrouds,
Its fair and brave to thee!
Vain, as to hope from heaving wave,
Obedience to thy will,
The hope to *here* unveil the grave,
Then worship — and be still.

1832.

I WOULD DIE YOUNG.

Ον Θεοι φιλεϐσι θνησκει νεος,
Whom the Gods love, die young.

I.

I WOULD die young — ere blight
Has gather'd on my years,
Or Sorrow's cold and sleepless night
Has turn'd all hope to tears.

II.

Ere a shadow on my heart
From a withering world has fell,
Ere that glory all in gloom depart,
Of which we joy to tell.

III.

The glory of the hours
When friendly music rung
Around our hearth — and fadeless flowers
Round all our pathway sprung.

IV.

I would die young ; — ere yet
That thronging, crushing crowd
Of passions free and fierce have met,
With angry voices loud,

V.

Around my heart's young altar,
To light that baleful fire,
Amid whose blasting blaze they falter,
The victims of the pyre !

VI.

I would not see the veil
Of my own spirit rent,
To wander, thenceforth, proud and pale,
Under this firmament.

VII.

To find in me the wreck
Of once a lofty soul,
Now bow'd to very fiends, whose beck
Nor bidding I control !

VIII.

I could but give to scorn
The mind I found a prey
To power so dark — so basely born,
So link'd with all decay.

IX.

I could but feel the curse
  That bows our manhood down,
And deem the deadly bondage worse,
  I never could disown.

X.

I would die young. There comes
  On these relentless years,
Some blast whose icy breath benumbs,
  Or lightning bolt that sears.

XI.

It is not that this frame
  Grows earthward, as at first —
And dim diseases rush to claim
  Their cold and charter'd dust.

XII.

It is not that the chain
  May fret my fever'd clay,
And I grow old and white with pain,
  Before it wears away.

XIII.

The agony were naught;
  That trial I could bear;
For he who long unscath'd has fought,
  Is mail'd against despair.

XIV.

It is the spirit shaken
  Unto its deep of deeps ;
It is the heart — the *heart* forsaken,
  Mid the vigils that it keeps !

XV.

When trusted ones are cold —
  The bravest and the best,
With whom we dream'd we might grow old,
  And gather to our rest.

XVI.

It is to see the brow,
  The purpling brow of Youth,
That bent itself, unsham'd, but now,
  Before the shrine of truth,

XVII.

On falsehood and on scorn,
  Indignant flash no more,
And veil in dust the glorious morn
  Of promise that it bore.

XVIII.

To see the flowers we cherish'd
  Droop sadly at our side,
While we had joyous pal'd and perish'd,
  So those blossoms had not died !

XIX.

To see our glory go —
The stars of all our hope,
Silent and stayless — dim and slow,
Out of this cheerless cope.

XX.

The heaven of our young life ,
Buried in clouds so soon ;
Our pilgrimage, all storm and strife ;
How dreary ere its noon !

XXI.

To see the mantling bloom
That cluster'd round our heart,
Breathing that rich and rare perfume
No earthly flowers impart —

XXII.

To see it wither all,
And feel the horrid sting
That *we* have caus'd its leaves to fall,
Or marr'd its blossoming !

XXIII.

To look into the deep
Of our own spirit's home,
And see what sleepless demons keep
Their watch there, like a gnome !

XXIV.

To see Hope turn'd to Hate;
To infamy the brave;
A world of foes, unseen, unsate,
Relentless as the grave!

XXV.

And, bitterest and last,
O God! to linger here,
When all we lov'd on earth has pass'd
Down to the sullen bier!

XXVI.

Yes — yes — I would die young,
Nor wander here alone;
For my spirit's deepest chords are wrung,
And all its music flown.

April, 1830.

HYMN,

Composed for the Dedication of the WESTMINSTER UNITARIAN CHURCH, *in Providence.*

I.

ALMIGHTY Lord! as on these walls
Thy herald light of glory falls,
We hail the coming of thy power
To bless the service and the hour!

II.

We dedicate a holier shrine
Than temples years have made divine;
In them, the heathen knees did bow,
But hearts are bent before Thee now!

III.

We raise no gorgeous pile to Thee,
Some idol's silent throne to be;
Lo! nobler altars here shall rise!
Ours is the spirit's sacrifice!

IV.

Come in a cloud of splendor, Lord!
Our high hosannas are abroad
In rapture for that light again
That consecrates our sounding fane.

V.

O, ever to One God alone
Be here the silver trumpet blown;
And here a stricken world be bow'd,
Where Truth, triumphant, speaks aloud!

ODE ON SHAKSPEARE.

'Twas at a time Apollo stood in tears!
The age of gold had gone;
The Muses wander'd to their home,
No longer from their halls to roam,
And e'en the eternal Youth seem'd pale with years!
The nations at his feet
In leaden silence meet,
And mourn and wonder round his tuneless throne!
But lo! a form appears,
Borne on the coming years;
Wrapt like a vision in his robe of air—
A thousand hues are there!
Yet 'tis a form of earth,
He treads like one of meaner birth;
And still that splendid brow
Springs into divinity,
The towering mount of poetry!
And now,
He comes, he comes!—it is our child—Shakspeare!
The sister choir
Touch'd with new fire,
Oppress'd with genius smite the lyre,

Till every wire
Grows wild with song!
He's here — he's here,
Shakspeare !

And long
They would have paean'd round Apollo's throne ;
But when the bard essay'd to put their madness down
At his triumphant word
Behold the madness flown !
Before his frown,
Silent they stood — and gazed, and heard,
Through that entrancing hour,
While all the mortals lost,
Star'd at his wildering power !
Within his hand,
Fashion'd of subtile thought, a wand
He bare ;
He wav'd it round his revelling hair,
That streamed like banners to the air,
And cried — 'appear !'

On Inspiration tost,
Enchanted Time call'd ages back
On their measureless track,
And past was present at his word 'appear !'
The wand is wav'd,
And heroes who were grav'd
Beneath eternal Rome,
Come in their kingly pomp, and kingly crowns,
Treading with Cæsar, in their helms and gowns,
Till Brutus stabs him down,
Then pass away in gloom !

But lo ! another wave,
And from the grave
Comes red-ey'd Murder, of himself afraid ;
Why starts he at that midnight bell !
Behold ! he seeks a crown ;
And on his meteor blade
Conscience has painted hell,
Which none but woman shames him to outbrave !

Again, before the enchanter's nod
Sweep up dark memories like a flood —
Another thing,
That would be England's king !
Intent on prayers and blood !
See how he plucks them down !
Those gentle flowers just blown —
Making a curst Ambition all his God !

He dies; — and see ! a vestal train,
To melancholy music's strain,
Comes mingling with the tents, and casques, and plumes.
A stately warrior there,
Stands in the misty air,
And while his boiling heart his country dooms,
See Mercy, Tears, and Love,
Illumin'd from above,
Kneel down in eloquence of Wo,
Until the bard himself begins to flow ;
The hero weeps — he turns, the victory's won,
The suppliant mother gains her exil'd son !

And now the scented air,
Fann'd up with pinions fair,
Small painted wings,
And clustering, glancing, brilliant things,
Made up of Thought, and Heaven, and Mirth, and Glee,
And elfin minstrelsy,
Drowns the delighted sense, and strange !
A wondrous change !
Revel is bursting all around !
Frolic is up
And shakes her curls,
While Bacchus' cup
With sack and nectar whirls !
He treads the trembling ground,
A mass of belted fun —
A roaring tun !
Until old Laughter just to life holds on,
To see thy mountain wit, Sir John !

But lo ! the Bard hath lost the smile
That brighten'd for a while ;
And now he calls on Love !
It is a silver night of Jove,
And eyes and lips are met
In the young white moonshine !
And see ! Love dares the tomb,
In mockery of death —
While Frenzy comes to rend the gloom
With blood and poison wet ;
Alas ! one common wreath
They desolately twine !

Again — see ! see !
Dark Jealousy —
With dagger, like his eye, side-gleaming !
The furies bear him down,
And at their snaky frown,
Bright Beauty with her fair hair streaming,
Dies in the smother'd cry
Of her innocent dreaming !

Once more the magic wand
Is bowing at his wild command ;
And see ! a king appears —
White with the cold of years !
He's talking with the clouds —
Companioning with elements ;
Wreck'd by ingratitude ; without a throne !
See how he looks upon the shrouds
That seem to wave him hence ;
And then — that thorny crown ;
O, houseless, kingly impotence !
See how he sinks in madness down —
Madness all pale and lone !

The Bard in sadness lower'd ;
He felt himself to madness grown,
And sunk before Apollo's throne,
By his own Genius overpower'd !
The Muses throng'd around
The godlike mortal who aveng'd their cause,
And shouted 'SHAKSPEARE ! by APOLLO crown'd,
Amid a world's applause !'

THE INSPIRATION OF MILTON.

I.

Behold him bow'd upon his lyre,
A giant-hearted man;
His hands hang sadly down the wire,
O'er which strange music ran,
When thoughts of far and mellow climes
Flush'd up the kindling god,
To sing of old impassion'd times,
And the glorious land he trod.

II.

Dreams he of storied Italy,
And the marbles that he sung,
When his startled pulse to fame beat high,
And his stainless life was young?
When he rov'd amid the pillar'd halls
Whose heroes round him bow'd,
And the deep stern silence of whose walls
Spoke to his spirit loud!

III.

Is there a vision on him now
Of the worship and renown,
That bore green garlands to his brow,
And brought the kingly down —

Down from their jewell'd thrones, to gaze
On the minstrel of the North,
Who in the morning of his days
To the march of fame went forth!

IV.

Dreams he of deep, dark, wondrous eyes,
Through rich and clustering hair,
That once, like stars from midnight skies
All gleaming round him were!
When lost in classic trance he laid
His head amid the vine,
And o'er him hung some Southern maid
Of Beauty's bravest line!

V.

O no! the palmy days of fame
Are now remember'd not;
And the olden music of his name
And beauty are forgot.
He dreams not of idolatry,
And the ocean noise of praise,
Nor of woman's royal starry eye,
That rose on other days.

VI.

He dreams not of the gems of earth
That gather'd round his brow,
Ere yet his spirit sprang to birth
With the joy that heaves him now!
The pageant of the world is past
In Time's last, long eclipse;
And the revelation comes at last,
In glory from his lips!

VII.

And lo, his lifted head! flung back,
How statue-like, and wan!
As tho' on Heaven's own cloudless track
His thoughts were journeying on.
Hark to his crashing lyre! — and, see!
How his heart's loud music calls
The flash of holy minstrelsy
Along his sightless balls.

VIII.

Blind, blind to sun, and moon, and stars,
And all the glowing land,
But his soul has burst the ebon bars
In uncontroll'd command!
A world of deathless light is round
His song-encompass'd way,
He leaps, elate, to nobler ground —
He strikes a loftier lay.

IX.

He sings of man — of godlike man,
His wonder and his Fall,
Just as the heaving earth began
To lift her coronal.
When to his white, unbelted breast,
Our faultless mother clung,
And from their Eden bowers of rest
The twain at evening sung.

X.

Of man! — reflected from the skies,
A glorious image, sure!

The sainted son of Paradise,
How passionless and pure!
Whose altar was a fragrant world,
Whose friends were all its flowers;
Whose incense from their bloom up-curl'd
Thro' all day's downy hours!

XI.

He sings how triple darkness fell
On the Garden's light at noon;
Immortal Hope exchang'd for Hell,
Death mid its bowers so soon!
The voice of God amid the trees,
The flaming sword of air,
The farewell sobs on every breeze,
Tears, terror, and despair!

XII.

He sings the rebel wars that rose
In billows to the gate
Of that unpillar'd Heaven, whose foes
Once mid its splendors sate,
A lost creation! — blight, and shame!
The grave, where empires go;
And Paradise! — a withering name,
The wilderness of wo!

XIII.

Gaze — gaze upon him, ye who train
Young Genius down to dust,
And in unhallow'd bondage chain
The worthiest with the worst;

Must naught but passion, earth, allure,
Ye of the glorious name!
And Inspiration's light endure
A service soil'd with shame!

XIV.

Go — let the sightless minstrel win,
O bard! to holier fount,
And to a nobler realm pass in
Above the classic mount;
There is the Poet's crown, and round
His upward, kindling way,
His lyre grows eloquent in sound
Of Virtue's deathless lay!

Aug. 1829.

ODE ON BYRON.*

I.

'Tis done! the Pilgrimage is o'er,
And Harold sinks to rest;
The minstrel dies on Grecia's shore,
In death how nobly blest!
Amid the tombs of great and glorious ones,
His heart and harp are lain;
Who from his dreams with Freedom's sons
Would summon him again!
He sleeps among her proudest slain!

II.

Alas, that heart and splendid lyre!
They both were bravely strung,
And then the thrice ethereal fire
That kindled on thy tongue!
'Twas borne from yonder bold Promethean height —
The brighter for its realm!
Why should that spirit plunge in night,
Its beams might overwhelm!
Why doom to earth so pure a light!

* Written soon after his death.

III.

Thy heart was made to bless the world,
How lofty was thy muse!
Yet oft thou from her throne hast *hurl'd*
The fame thou'dst blush'd to *lose!*
How more than vain for *thee* to curse mankind,
Whom earth hath known so well!
Thy death was love! — too unconfin'd
In stately shrine to dwell!
Hate could not blacken such a mind.

IV.

There is a wailing and a cry
Above thy sacred pall —
Yet who to win thy destiny,
Would hazard soul and all!
It went in doubt and darkness to the grave;
Its hope was but a child!
And over Time's retreating wave
What solace round it smil'd!
The clime alone thou'dst dream'd to save!

V.

Thy heart was proudly desolate,
Yet desolate in vain;
For thou hast charg'd on guiltless fate
Thy self-inflicted pain!
And who could hope for God, that drove him hence,
That laugh'd at his decrees?
Thou could'st not mend thy bold offence,
For thine were hard unbending knees,
Thou hast but scoff'd at Providence!

VI.

Who bade thee to this thankless world !
Thou hast not own'd the power !
Who touch'd the lip so oft has curl'd
To curse thy morning hour ?
Who sent, to jewel earth, that starry mind ?
Thou hast but dimm'd its ray,
Or flung its splendor on the wind —
Or lavish'd half its beams away,
And left a deadly light behind !

VII.

Thine was a high inheritance —
The fine poetic crown !
For thee young glory beckon'd hence
And pointed to her throne !
How doubly blest to be both great and good,
And in Fame's glittering robe,
To tower unmov'd above her flood,
Elate with sceptre and the globe ! —
But thou hast tainted all thy blood.

VIII.

And were not thine the wealthy halls,
And birth — and joy — and love !
What more that from kind Heaven falls
Could clothe thee from above ?
But thou thy wings of power around thee furl'd
In smiles of mockery —
And from her pride that Genius hurl'd,
Had made idolaters to thee —
The bard whose music drown'd the world !

IX.

And did not Beauty bow to thee
Amid her bridal flowers,
And swear in holiness to be
Devoted for life's hours!
And could'st thou blast affection's wreath so soon!
To see its young leaves bow
And wither at thy manhood's noon!
Or was it that that fatal vow
Found woman's heart a senseless boon!

X.

Thine enemies thou'st call'd all men —
And Heaven thy veriest foe!
Thy foulest bitterness has been
A mimicry of wo.
How vainly hast thou trumpeted thy wrongs
Above thy vengeful lyre!
No tortur'd heart to such belongs,
As flash with such ungodly fire! —
Thou'st laugh'd amid thy darkest songs!

XI.

Yet who hath won such high command
For such a homeless king!
Alas! each weak tho' holier hand
Hangs palsied o'er the string:
The astonish'd heart of half the world was thine,
Self-exil'd prince of song!
Thou wast a wild portentous sign,
Like a lost planet, swept along —
Imperial monarch of the Nine!

XII.

Thou'st fallen with more than Cæsar's pride,
Immortal Græcia's son —
Thy lyre's last thrilling swell hath died
Around the Parthenon!
Beauty and Valor, in his helm, are there —
A second Scio mourns!
And all that's godlike, brave, and fair,
To that cold pulseless relic turns — *
Thou hast the tribute of despair!

XIII.

And up from England's sunny glades
Ascends a nation's cry;
While Tempe's and Olympus' maids
Gaze wildly on the sky!
And round, in mute distress, the Muses rave!
O, fear not for thy shroud —
A world shall roam that classic wave,
And mourn his memory, aloud,
About the Pilgrim-poet's grave!

* It was said, probably for the purpose of effect, that his lordship bequeathed his *heart* to the country, to which, while living, its most fervent aspirations had been devoted.

ODE ON MUSIC.

I.

Spirit of Heaven! that bowed, of old,
A Presence from on high,
And when the dewy earth was young,
Over its gardens and its waves
Thy many voices flung,
Till all the whispery woods and murmuring caves
Thy coming told!
O, how the wondering earth awoke
To the mingled strains that round it broke,
As, answering to the sphery sky,
Whose fabled music then went pealing by,
On the deep tide of air,
With sounds still varied, rich, and rare,
The new creation rung!

II.

Spirit of Melody! that first
O'er sinless man held sway
And on his solitude didst burst
In one resistless stream,
Bearing his ravish'd soul away!

Fain would I sing
From early time thy power.
But lo ! as comes the hallow'd dream
Of thee, in that young hour,
When echo first awoke on Eden's bower,
There seems a spell on harp and string,
And my hand roams idly as they ring !

III.

All earth was then enchanted ground,
And the spirit yet to Time unknown
Could mar the sacred harmony of sound :
Not yet was Nature taught to frown
On proud and charter'd man ;
But joy, sweet Music's sister, o'er him bent
Perpetual from the firmament,
While she,
With artless fingers, fast and free,
Thro' all her thousand changes ran,
Still pouring on his ear
The endless wonder of her voice,
Till he felt his leaping heart rejoice,
'Twas such deep luxury to hear !

IV.

But ah ! a sword of flame,
The sword and sign of wrath
O'er Paradise is wav'd,
And he who God and Heaven hath brav'd ,
Goes cowering forth in shame,

And a voice from a ruin'd world is there,
Like the voices of despair!
Then first fell Discord came
In the sound that swept his path!

V.

But Mercy still was left
To the exil'd and bereft;
And Music still went o'er his heart
A sweet and gentle thing,
Making of all his life a part
Mid all his wandering;
Though lost was half its melody,
And that last magic gone,
Mid which its earliest strains were born,
When a spirit from the sky
It came to listening man,
Ere yet he felt that he might die,
Or Guilt a blasting shadow fling
O'er Glory thus began!

VI.

It breath'd around the world!
And on each teeming element
In one unceasing symphony it went
With its sounding wings unfurl'd.

He heard it on the air,
When all the winds were out,
As clouds against the sun did bear,
And to the breezy voices fast
Went trampling on their route!
When a shade upon the mountains cast,

Told of banner'd things above,
And the deep-ton'd thunder spoke,
Till all its shaking bass awoke,
And the plum'd forest seem'd to move !

VII.

He heard it mid the trees !
When forth in thought he hied
Under the eventide,
When flowers were closing on the drowsy bees.
Then as in dreamy mood he twin'd
His linked fancies wild,
He heard far up, as one afraid,
The singing by the shrill leaves made —
Then shouted, as a child,
To that lone harping of the wind !

VIII.

He heard it from the earth !
When in the silent heat of day
Like pilgrim pantingly he lay
Beside the bubbling fount,
Of streams that had their dewy birth
On some untrodden mount,
Leaping and lost among the hills,
Ten thousand tun'd and tinkling rills !

IX.

He heard it by the sea !
The old and the magnificent !
Where God's sublimest wonders be,
All Power with Glory blent !

There, from the warrior waves
That rode the battling storm,
He heard the anthem of its roar
Passing from shore to shore,
And saw the tempest's cloudy form
Above its gath'ring thunder bent.

X.

Again, when listening laid
In some green grotto's shade,
He heard the voices of the deep
Like those which stir us in our sleep,
Come mellow through the hidden caves!
And O! what noble harmonies
Were voices such as these,
To a spirit fine and free,
When Ocean his responses made,
And Music walk'd the Sea!

XI.

But circling Time has sped,
And o'er the living and the dead
As through her morning years
Sweet Nature pours her chorus round,
From Sea and Air and peopled Ground,
A fount of Music still!
Flush'd brow and burning tears
Attest the wonder of her will
O'er every heart of every clime
Made captive to that magic chime!
'Tis bursting all around!
The summer birds about us go,

Those prodigals of sound,
Scatt'ring their untaught melody
In one perpetual flow
Out of the waken'd sky!

XII.

And Woman's voice! O! who shall tell
When the weary heart is bow'd,
And a veil is round it, like a cloud,
How many blessed thoughts of comfort well
From its deepest fountain-home,
When the strains of her low-breath'd music come,
As some o'erwaving wand,
And Sorrow's long eclipse
Retires before her thrilling lips,
In their quiet, strange command!

XIII.

O! Music — tho' to thee
Hath bright-ey'd Art, from yonder skies,
Come in the ceaseless ministry
Of new, yet wild and winning, harmonies —
Still let me dwell
With thee by solitude of wooded well,
And hear thee, in thy voices, as they go
From all above — around — below.
I care not for the organ's shout
'Neath St Cecilia's wildering hand,
When in the fulness of a band
Seems Music's wealth pour'd out,
And madd'ning thoughts are born! —
I care not for the trumpet's swell,

Nor yet the volum'd horn!
Give me but Ocean's ringing shell
And chorded minstrelsy,
Or the city's solemn bell
On Midnight's pinions floating by!
Nor trump, nor lute, nor lyre,
Nor harp with thousand strings,
Can me inspire,
Like that first harmony which rode
On Nature's freer wings,
When green creation sprung
Upon the teeming air,
And winds and waves their anthem sung
Around the blooming blest abode
Of Eden's breathless pair!

1830.

ODE ON LAFAYETTE,

On the occasion of his Visit to this Country in 1825.

I.

Chief of the mighty heart — all hail!
How art thou wafted on —
Loud Freedom thundering on the gale
A nation's choral song!
O, it is well to such as thee
Our world should bend its iron knee,
To whom its thanks belong.
What nobler homage hath it known,
Than when it bows to worth alone?

II.

O, who hath seen an hour like thine,
Great Patriot of our land,
When all the hearts of all the clime
Acknowledge thy command?
Foul were the traitor spirit here,
Would mock thee with an icy tear,
Or with a nerveless hand —
No; when we greet that bounding soul,
Our own would feel its pulses roll!

III.

Were not our fathers proud of thee,
When thy bright years were young,
And Love was left for Victory,
Tho' Beauty round thee clung!
And shall the children thankless gaze
Upon the Father of their days,
Whose panting soul was wrung
To win, in such a bold defence,
So splendid an inheritance!

IV.

O, may our land forget us, ere
With such remembrance by,
We should so soulless linger here,
Or so ignobly die!
The meanest heart that God has form'd,
If not by such high memories storm'd,
Sees no redemption nigh —
It dies, as basest things have died —
— Vile earth, to which it was allied.

V.

There is a virtue in thy fame,
The charm of patriot eyes;
Outglorying each less holy name
In peerless sacrifice;
The home, the hope, the prayers, the tears,
The ocean-storm, the toil of years —
Thy country's golden ties!
O, who could such a host forget,
Save thy unbending soul, Fayette?

VI.

The Roman, when he sought the home
For which his blood was given,
Found still but hard, imperial Rome
In his triumphal heaven!
The hands and helms that battled on
Thro' all her stormy Marathon,
From nobler Greece were driven —
But ah! the pride that crowns *thy* years!
The triumph of a nation's tears!

VII.

This is the monarchy of soul —
Above the power of kings,
As high as these far lights that roll
Above earth's dimmer things.
Such godlike spirit has no peers
Among the wrecks of lowlier spheres;
It floats on bolder wings!
O, whose beside thy star shall shine!
What splendor now can cope with thine!

VIII.

There is a roar upon the wave —
The thunder of our joy,
O'er thee, the ardent, young, and brave,
The gallant patriot boy,
Who sprang upon our iron shore,
To bathe his virgin blade in gore,
To conquer, or destroy;
Long years have pass'd above thy brow —
Thou com'st the hoary warrior now!

IX.

Young hands are clasp'd before thy form,
In innocence and prayer;
And Age, that bore with thee the storm,
Comes in his snowy hair;
And tears are rain'd — and palms are wrung —
And silence palsies the poor tongue —
The soul alone is there!
O, ask not why the tear-drop starts —
What can contain the tide of hearts!

X.

Thy way is thro' the joyous ranks
Of millions of the Free!
O, how unlike *those* coward Franks *
Who would dishonour thee!
The shrinking† billows of thy shore,
As conscious of a curse they bore,
Went backward to the sea;
But *here* the tongues of all the waves
Roar 'welcome,' o'er our foeman's graves.

* The patriotism of the citizens of Havre had prepared for him a reception well calculated to gratify his feelings; but the absurd jealousy of the police checked this expression of the public sentiment, and would have produced a scene of disorder and bloodshed, if the inhabitants had been less discreet. Police officers, gens d'armes, and Swiss soldiers rivalled each other in their zeal to repress the noble ardour of the citizens, during the short time that General Lafayette remained among them. *See Le Vasseur's Tour.*

† The retiring tide at the time of embarkation too well expresses the repulsive state of feeling described in the above extract.

XI.

Then welcome *our* immortal son,
To Freedom's heavenly ground!
Fair hands — bright beings wave thee on,
And shower their roses round!
O what had ancient conquerors done
To grasp the triumph thou hast won —
The glory thou hast found!
Go forth — as great as thou art good —
Thine is an empire's gratitude!

STANZAS,

Sung at Plymouth, on the Anniversary of the landing of our Fathers, 22d Dec. 1820.

Wake your harp's music! — louder — higher,
And pour your strains along,
And smite again each quiv'ring wire,
In all the pride of Song!
Shout like those godlike men of old,
Who daring storm and foe,
On this bless'd soil their anthem roll'd,
Two hundred years ago!

From native shores by tempests driven,
They sought a purer sky,
And found beneath a wilder heaven,
The home of liberty!
An altar rose — and prayers — a ray
Broke on their night of wo —
The harbinger of Freedom's day,
Two hundred years ago!

They clung around that symbol too,
Their refuge and their all;
And swore while skies and waves were blue,
That altar should not fall.

They stood upon the red man's sod,
'Neath heaven's unpillar'd bow,
With home — a country — and a God,
Two hundred years ago!

Oh! 'twas a hard unyielding fate
That drove them to the seas,
And Persecution strove with Hate,
To darken her decrees:
But safe above each coral grave,
Each booming ship did go —
A God was on the western wave,
Two hundred years ago!

They knelt them on the desert sand,
By waters cold and rude,
Alone upon the dreary strand
Of Ocean'd solitude!
They look'd upon the high blue air,
And felt their spirits glow,
Resolved to live or perish there,
Two hundred years ago!

The Warrior's red right arm was bar'd,
His eye flash'd deep and wild;
Was there a foreign footstep dar'd
To seek his home and child?
The dark chiefs yell'd alarm — and swore
The white man's blood should flow,
And his hewn bones should bleach their shore,
Two hundred years ago!

But lo! the warrior's eye grew dim,
His arm was left alone;
The still black wilds which shelter'd him,
No longer were his own!
Time fled—and on this hallow'd ground
His highest pine lies low,
And cities swell where forests frown'd,
Two hundred years ago!

Oh! stay not to recount the tale,
'Twas bloody — and 'tis past;
The firmest cheek might well grow pale,
To hear it to the last.
The God of Heaven, who prospers us,
Could bid a nation grow,
And shield us from the red man's curse,
Two hundred years ago!

Come then great shades of glorious men,
From your still glorious grave;
Look on your own proud land again,
Oh! bravest of the brave!
We call ye from each mould'ring tomb,
And each blue wave below,
To bless the world ye snatch'd from doom,
Two hundred years ago!

Then to your harps—yet louder—higher—
And pour your strains along,
And smite again each quiv'ring wire,
In all the pride of song!

Shout *for* those godlike men of old,
Who daring storm and foe,
On this bless'd soil their anthem roll'd,
TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO!

ODE

ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL, JUNE 17, 1825.

I.

Ye spirits of our fathers, wake!
The battle morn has come;
I feel the ground beneath me quake,
I hear the signal drum. —
The tramp of steeds, and the deep war cry
Are bursting on the ear,
And mailed men sweep hurrying by
To glory, or — their bier!

II.

Up to that sacred hill
Where Freedom has entrench'd her all,
She calls her iron sons:
Her echoes all the concave fill,
And wide her mandate runs
Electric through that living wall!
And Liberty 's her cry.
O! how the magic of that sound,
Hath brought unconquerable helms around;
Train'd to high vengeance through an age of wrong —
See how the phalanx bends along,
With bloodless cheek and deadly eye!

Say ye 'tis fear hath blench'd them — say
Would cowards *thus* for Death prepare!
No — 'tis the curse that stamps the day —
The fate that dooms them on this bloody way,
The last pale omen of despair!

III.

And now the stern alarms
Have gone o'er half the land —
One prayer to God — and then to arms —
To slavery — or command!
Behold them breaking o'er the hills,
And hear the shout that rolls its music on,
Inspiring Liberty herself with joy
Until its thundering chorus fills
The expanding spirits of the warrior van,
And makes a veteran of each patriot boy!

IV.

Upwards against the morning sun,
That lifts him from his clouds,
As though, before the war begun,
He'd smile upon their shrouds,
Elate the heroes tread.
The Cause to each a noble zeal imparts,
And swells their fearless forms —
They come resign'd to woes and storms,
To die on Victory's bed!
No conqueror in gold,
With crown to worship or to save,
Could lure a band so bold:
Never by such are *Freemen* led —

The few immortal brave!
Their leaders are their deathless hearts,
Their crown — a grave!

V.

And who are they, that swarm the glittering shore,
Mid trumpet-blast, and cannons' opening roar!
Whose plumes are bowing in the lurid air,
And whose the banners that are flaunting there!
Gaze on the bearing of that splendid host,
And then believe that slavery is its boast!
Ay — then believe these soldiers of long years,
Are brethren and our fathers — without tears,
Or shame, of that ennobling penitence,
That like a flaming sword, would drive them hence!

VI.

Our brethren and our fathers — and yet men —
This long array of glittering things!
No! were they such, they'd never been
Automatons of Kings!
No more! abroad the sullen knell hath swung,
And friends and fathers are forgot:
The soul's last charities outwrung,
Are now remember'd not.
The burning sword of Destiny
Hath cut the tie forever —
But the iron one that binds the *Free*
Nor time nor tyranny can sever!

VII.

The patriot blades are out — uplifted high,
Their pennons on the blue

Broadly unfold their thousand stars,
To telegraph the band
To Death, or Victory!
While on their foe's astonished view,
Appear our banner's flaming bars,
As though to guard the Eden of the land!
How idle is ambition now —
Ambition grasping at the air —
The war-storm scowling o'er its brow
Upon a world so young and fair!
What though ye doom to sword and fire,
The feasts of Desolation;
The *Spirit* still survives the pyre,
That blazing on through son and sire,
Shall yet illume the nation.

VIII.

In vain — the trump hath blown —
And now upon that reeking hill
Slaughter rides screaming on the vengeful ball;
While with terrific signal shrill,
The vultures, from their bloody eyries flown,
Hang o'er them like a pall.
Now deeper roll the maddening drums,
And the mingling host like ocean heaves:
While from the midst a horrid wailing comes,
And high above the fight the lonely bugle grieves!
Woe to the reddening spirits now,
That war for slavery and crowns —
For chains and jewelry!
For Freedom's withering frowns
Look night upon them, while her brow,

Forth issuing from her stormy hair,
Beams like a beacon through a rended sky,
On giant arms and bosoms bare!

IX.

But whence the light that bursts along the shore!
As though some demon in delight,
Sat thron'd in flames before the fight,
In mockery of its roar!
It is the foe's last, damning deed —
Our homes and altars blaze!
Great God! the conflagration swells,
Bidding red-sandall'd Ruin speed
On bursting shells,
And Thine own temples from their bases raze!
'Tis done — and high on Bunker's moat,
Above the wreathing fires,
Columbia's standards float
Amid the ashes of her spires!

X.

But ah! along that trembling steep,
The sorrow of stern hearts is swelling;
The patriot band! they weep — they weep
A hero to his dwelling.
Warren hath past to his eternal sleep
In honour's shroud;
And as the faithful cluster round
His hallow'd clay,
Forgotten are the battle sound —
Insulted hopes — invaded homes —
The desolated temple's crashing domes —
Until the big collected grief gives way,

And pale Columbia's genius weeps aloud.
Oh ! England, if there ever came
O'er thee the blush of generous shame ;
If through some dim but coming year,
When musing upon days like these,
Thy glowing memory linger here,
'Twill redden all thy island seas !

'Twas finished — and the veiled sun
Went weeping to his waves,
To see what brothers' hands had done
Upon that hill of graves !

* * * * * * *
* * * * * *

XI.

Long years have fled
Over the gallant dead,
And lo ! the issue of that battle morn !
Hark where their hallelujahs break —
'Men of America, awake !
The vision's past —— a world is born !'
And lo ! again
What pageant crowns that holy hill —
As though the ghosts of all the slain
Were mustering round it still !
The clouds of heaven above us shine,
There rolls the same deep sea ;
But oh ! *this* morn unveils the shrine
Of *Memory's* Jubilee.
And heroes of that stormy time,
Each like some giant tree,

Which though of old in lightning bath'd,
Still towers in its decay,
Stand round, proud relics of the day,
Escap'd through all that war of crime,
Though not unscarr'd, unscath'd.

XII.

Up to the summit where their hearts repose,
Freedom, in her fine flush of glory, goes;
And following in her golden steps, the throng
Of hymning Freemen, moves in light and song;
Youth wings in transport up the teeming way
Where our gray fathers sprang to Liberty,
To pay the earliest tribute at a shrine,
That, with such martyrs, made the cause divine;
Whilst hopeless age, lighting his wintry eye,
Pants to complete *this* pilgrimage — and die!

XIII.

Now in the presence of the brave
On whom they call,
Of those who blood and being gave
To 'scape ignoble thrall,
The children vow a Temple to their Sires:
Which in the land shall be
A type of fadeless memory —
A people purified in Glory's fires!
Around them come the great and good;
The remnant of the race,
That firm as mountain pillars stood
Upon that earthquake place.

With streaming eyes,
As recollection backward flies,
They gaze upon the sod;
Until their o'ercharg'd souls in rapture rise
In silence to their God!

XIV.

One peerless patriot lingers yet *—
The idol of *our* world;
Yet by his own how meanly priz'd!
Whose Virtue, Freedom shall forget,
When mind is paralyz'd
And Liberty's last banner furl'd.
He comes, in his calm evening now,
And from this pinnacle of pride,
Wide o'er the land he flings his parting smile;
Then to the hearts that nobly died
He dedicates the pile,
While shouting millions consummate the vow!

XV.

Great Father of the free!
An empire's eyes are bent on thee —
Thou hast a people's prayers and tears;
Great soul! that knew no bounds in hemispheres!
Oh may this solid temple rise
To where our own fierce eagle flies,
Into the brilliant air;
Towering along our rocky shores,
Emblem of thee, thou peerless one!
Whose life in moral grandeur soars
Unrivall'd to the sun!

* Lafayette.

While thought shall stamp its splendid form,
In characters of glory
That vanish but in Time's last storm
When fame forgets the story!

SAILING OF THE BRANDYWINE.*

I.

He has gone to the land of his fathers again,
The Lord of the Free to the hills of his home;
Behind him the summits of Liberty wane,
Before him the billows are bursting in foam!
O! well on that wild uncontrollable sea
May a spirit like his leap and thrill as they throng,
Whose waves rise around him like arms of the Free,
To bear him in triumph their loud ranks along!

II.

Like a vision he pass'd — like a new orb of day;
That flung o'er a people the light of its smile,
And the tears of full hearts fell bright round his way,
Which the rainbow of Gratitude spann'd all the while!
And now in the east where the Warrior sails,
High in beauty unfading that arch shall remain —
For the hues of his glory no element veils,
And the sun of our Mem'ry sinks never again!

* In this frigate, one of the most beautiful ships in our navy, did Gen. Lafayette return to France, after his visit to this country.

III.

Proud bark of our country! pass bold to the seas;
The deep prayers of millions shall hallow thy wake,
While the King of the storms shall chasten the breeze,
Till a home on thy flag shall enchantingly break!
Glide, monarch of ships, in splendor along,
Unbosom thy beauties abroad on the sky —
Thou art mann'd with the brave — illustrious throng!
And freighted with glory whole worlds cannot buy!

IV.

Before thee is Hope — Joy round thee is ringing,
And farewells behind thee float plaintively down;
While Naiads beneath, their sea-music singing,
Return the shrill ocean-airs over thee blown;
O, ride on thy bright course — prosperous, free!
Thy name is a watchword, thy duty sublime!
Recollections of glory shall cluster round thee,
Like that round the Brave on the Ocean of Time!

THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF WASHINGTON'S BIRTH DAY. 1832.

I.

THERE was a gathering to the Capitol.
With measur'd step a patriot throng went up;
The sire, and child, and mother, there to fall
Before their Father's God — and pour the cup
Of Mem'ry's deep libation over One
Who rose upon our darken'd path, the spirit's sun!

II.

It was a day of glory round the land —
Of melancholy glory — when the heart
Of a whole Nation bow'd to the command
Of pale Columbia's Genius — and the start
And thrill of its pulsations came like tears
O'er the departed beautiful of buried years!

III.

An Empire's gratitude! a people's prayer
Over the dust of him who marshall'd them
To greatness on, through victory, that there,
Through the wide land he woke to life, his name,

With its undying virtue might abide,
A monument above Time's tempest, and its tide.

IV.

But who were they that far off stood at gaze
Upon the passing jubilee — whose eyes
Look'd from their leaden lids in dim amaze,
And Judas lips curl'd with a faint surprise ?
Who *were* they ? who but traitors, that would sever
The Giant's golden locks, and slave their land forever!

V.

They knew not Washington. They have departed
From the immortal lessons he bequeath'd
In his sad Farewell to the great high-hearted,
Who with his own their deathless fame had wreath'd;
They knew not Washington — and when it came,
That proud day of his Memory, they cower'd in shame!

VI.

They went not to the hall of Joy, but crept,
As with a felon fear, and scowling eye
From that high spot where truer spirits wept
O'er eloquence that ravish'd from the sky
The Hero, and the Father, till again
His Presence seem'd to start on each entranced brain!

VII.

They went not to the hall of prayer, to bow,
And join the wide thanksgiving. Such as they
Had felt the 'deep damnation' of a vow —
For such it had been sacrilege to pray !
Their hearts are indurated — and each soul
Black with the madd'ning fumes of Ruin's poison'd bowl.

VIII.

My country — O my country ! if it be
That they who gave us Freedom — and that One
Who bore its banner, foremost of the Free,
The tried, but Heaven-encompass'd Washington,
Shall be forgot, and the Republic bow
Before the threatening arms that clash above it now ;*

IX.

Then farewell to thy Glory ! I would go
To distant lands, and make my bed in dust
Ere I would linger here to *see* the blow
Would change that Glory to a thing accurst ;
Ere I would linger for the trumpet-call
To rend thy floating star-flag from the Capitol !

* This was written while a spirit of disaffection was prevalent in this country, and disunion was talked of without any attempt at concealment.

COLUMBUS.

'It was about the middle of April, that Columbus arrived at Barcelona, where every preparation had been made to give him a solemn and magnificent reception' —

* * * * *

——— 'hidalgos of gallant bearing, together with a vast concourse of the populace came forth to meet and welcome him. His entrance into this noble city has been compared to one of those triumphs which the Romans were accustomed to decree to conquerors.' —

* * * * *

——— 'after these followed Columbus, on horseback, surrounded by a brilliant cavalcade of Spanish chivalry; the streets were almost impassable from the countless multitudes; the windows and balconies were crowded with the fair — the very roofs were covered with spectators' — &c, &c, &c. — *See Washington Irving's Life of Columbus.*

I.

The orient morn comes broadly up
  On Barcelona's towers;
And sounds of joyous festival
  Are waking in her bowers:
The earth is sending to the skies
  The trumpet's startling strain,
And glance ten thousand flashing eyes
In thy heart-burying surprise,
  O! dark, imperial Spain!

II.

The *'Admiral of the Ocean Sea'
Has come in triumph there;
And yet no victor's garlands wait
His temples pale and bare!
He rides, a nobler conqueror
Than earth shall boast again —
For who sublimer presence saw
Than his, who bow'd all hearts in awe,
The monarch of the main!

III.

A world is bursting on his way —
As ocean to its shores,
So the loud, hurrying human tide
In tumult round him pours;
Brave! brave it surges on his ear
This stormy welcoming;
Banners, like shifting clouds, appear
Rolling above his head — and near
Deep-ton'd hosannas ring!

IV.

And on his far resounding path
Sink crucifix and crown;
And from high bower and balcony
The light of Spain looks down!
For Beauty's dark, dark virgin eyes

* This singular title was the one by which Columbus was officially addressed, on his triumphant return.

Gleam ceaseless round him now,
As stars, from still upheaving skies,
Would new-born from the waves arise,
On his advancing prow!

V.

Amid the weltering throng he rides
With gallant cavaliers;
Begirt, as if a king went by
On his bright path of tears!
And round his flower-entangled way
A thousand hands are flung,
Waving wide welcome to the day,
That bears the unconquer'd seaman gray,
Spain's chivalry among!

VI.

Onward they gather to the throne
Of gem-encircled power;
But lo! its glory is eclips'd
In that exulting hour!
The monarch rises from his gold,
And crownless is his brow —
Not kings irreverent may behold
The white-hair'd mariner so bold,
Who stands before them now!

VII.

Then to the listening land he tells
The visions of the West;
And points him to the silver seas
And islands of the blest;
Till on each dreamy spirit swells

Beyond the shore of sighs,
A clime where gold with glory dwells,
And one wide Eldorado wells
With founts of Paradise!

VIII.

Silent the marvelling nation stands
A stern, unmov'd array,
In one long-center'd gaze on him,
The sun of that great day!
Then from the waken'd hurtling rout,
As bursting from the tombs,
Pouring its earthquake chorus out,
Rolls bravely up one rocking shout,
Whose thunder shakes their plumes!

IX.

A smile flits o'er the Mariner,
A light is in his eye;
As reeling to the cloudless heaven
Goes up that trumpet cry!
And o'er that spirit-startled land
One burning glance he throws,
As proud, as if before the wand
Of some enchanter's quick command,
Another India rose!

X.

Thus in tempestuous acclaim
He passes to his halls,
Where loud and late a world's applause
In echo round him falls;
While soldiers of the cross and sword

With crosier and in helm,
Hang on each new portentous word
From him, the idol, the ador'd,
The glory of the realm!

XI.

Yet, when the golden years had fled,
And kingdoms had been won,
Where was that gray and godlike man
Who such high deeds had done!
Well may cheeks crimson at the tale!
Strike not that chord again —
Oblivion — drop thy iron veil
O'er thoughts that rise like 'souls in bale,'
On crush'd and thankless Spain.

XII.

O! could that recollection die
That dims thy days of fame,
Then, land of storied chivalry,
Were thine a peerless name;
But while the heart of man shall heave
One pulse to glory, vain,
Tho' bright past visions she may weave,
The hope that Memory *there* will leave
One verdant footstep, Spain!

NAPOLEON.

Napoleon, when in St Helena, beheld a bust of his son, and wept.

I.

Long on the Parian bust he gaz'd,
And his pallid lips mov'd not;
But when his deep cold eye he rais'd,
His glory was forgot;
And the heated tears came down like rain,
As the buried years swept back again —
He wept aloud!

II.

He who had, tearless, rode the storm
Of human agony,
And with ambition wild and warm,
Sail'd on a bloody sea,
He bent before the infant head,
And wept — as a mother weeps her dead!
The pale and proud!

III.

The roar of all the world had pass'd;
On a sounding rock alone,
An exile — to the earth he cast
His gather'd glories down!
Yet dreamt he of his victor race,
Till, turning to that marble face,
His heart gave way;

IV.

And Nature saw her time of power —
A conqueror in tears!
The mighty bow'd before a flower
In the chastisement of years.
What can this mystery control?
The father comes, as man's high soul,
And hopes decay!

V.

Alone before that chissel'd brow,
His proudest victories
Flit by like hated phantoms now,
And holier visions rise;
The empire of the heart unveils,
And lo! that crownless creature wails
His days of power!

VI.

The golden days whose suns went down,
As at the icy pole,
Lighting with dim, but cold renown,
The kingdom of the soul!

When all life's charities were dead,
And each affection fail'd, or fled,
That withering hour!

VII.

Oh! had the monarch to the wind
His hope of conquest flung,
And to the victory of Mind,
Had his warrior footsteps rung,
What then were desert rocks and seas,
To one whom Destiny decrees
Such fadeless fame?

VIII.

Oh! had the tyrant cast his crown
And jewels all away;
What though the pomp of life had flown,
And left a lowering day!
Then had thy speaking bust, brave boy!
Awoke with memories of joy
Thy fated name!

THE BUGLE.

But still the dingle's hollow throat,
Prolong'd the swelling Bugle's note ;
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles' answer'd with their scream ;
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till Echo seem'd an answering blast.

Lady of the Lake.

I.

O, WILD, enchanting horn !
Whose music, up the deep and dewy air,
Swells to the clouds, and calls on Echo there,
'Till a new melody is born !

II.

Wake, wake again ; the night
Is bending from her throne of Beauty down,
With still stars beaming on her azure crown,
Intense, and eloquently bright !

III.

Night, at its pulseless noon !
When the far voice of waters mourns in song,
And some tir'd watch-dog, lazily and long,
Barks at the melancholy moon !

IV.

Hark! how it sweeps away,
Soaring and dying on the silent sky,
As if some sprite of sound went wandering by,
With lone halloo and roundelay.

V.

Swell, swell in glory out!
Thy tones come pouring on my leaping heart,
And my stirr'd spirit hears thee with a start,
As boyhood's old remember'd shout!

VI.

O, have ye heard that peal,
From sleeping city's moon-bath'd battlements,
Or from the guarded field and warrior tents,
Like some near breath around ye steal!

VII.

Or have ye, in the roar
Of sea, or storm, or battle, heard it rise,
Shriller than eagle's clamor to the skies,
Where wings and tempests never soar!

VIII.

Go, go; no other sound,
No music, that of air or earth is born,
Can match the mighty music of that horn,
On Midnight's fathomless profound!

THE TRUE GLORY OF AMERICA.

At mihi perpetuo patria tellure carendum est—
—Et sola est patria pœna carere mea.

I.

Italia's vales and fountains,
Tho' beautiful ye be,
I love my soaring mountains,
And forests more than ye;
And tho' a dreamy greatness rise
From out your cloudy years,
Like hills on distant, stormy skies,
Seem dim thro' Nature's tears,
Yet more I love the greatness
Uprising round me here,
Untouched by Nature's lateness,
So sternly proud and clear!

II.

The light that Time flings round a land,
A sacred light may be;
But oh! it leads not to command
Like that which crowns the Free!

And holy that unfaded light
That lingers with the dead;
But then the beams, how passing bright,
That fire the path we tread!
Then tell me not of years of old,
Of ancient heart and clime;
Ours is the land and age of gold,
And ours the hallow'd time!

III.

The jewell'd crown and sceptre
Of Greece have pass'd away;
And none of all who wept her,
Could bid her splendor stay.
The world has shaken with the tread
Of iron-sandal'd crime —
And lo! o'ershadowing all the dead
The conqueror stalks sublime!
Then ask I not for crown and plume
To nod above my land;
The Victor's footsteps point to doom,
Graves open round his hand!

IV.

Rome! with thy pillar'd palaces,
And sculptur'd heroes all,
Snatch'd in their warm triumphal days,
To Art's high festival;
Rome! with thy giant sons of power,
Whose pathway was on thrones,

Who built their kingdoms of an hour
On yet unburied bones —
I would not have my land like thee
So lofty — yet so cold!
Be hers a lowlier majesty,
In yet a nobler mould.

V.

Thy marbles — works of wonder!
In thy victorious days,
Whose lips did seem to sunder
Before th' astonish'd gaze;
When statue glar'd on statue there,
The living on the dead —
And men as silent pilgrims were
Before some sainted head!
O, not for faultless marbles yet,
Would I the light forego,
That beams when other lights have set,
And art herself lies low!

VI.

I ask not for the chisel's boast,
A Pantheon's cloud of glory;
Bathing in heaven's noon-tide the host
Of those who swell her story!
Though those proud works of magic hands,
Fame's rolling trump shall fill,
The best of all those peerless bands
Is pulseless marble still.

And though no classic madness here,
With quick transforming eye
Bid Beauty from the block appear,*
Till Love stand doubting by!

VII.

I care not — for a brighter wreath,
Than round the Parian brows
Of those whose marbles seem'd to breathe,
Shall wait our holier vows.
And ours a holier hope shall be
Than consecrated bust,
Some loftier mean of memory
To snatch us from the dust.
And ours a sterner art than this,
Shall fix our image here,
The Spirit's mould of loveliness —
A nobler Belvidere!

VIII.

Then let them bind with bloomless flowers
The busts and urns of old,
A fairer heritage be ours,
A sacrifice less cold!
Give honor to the great and good,
And wreathe the living brow;
Kindling with Virtue's mantling blood,
And pay the tribute now!

* The story of Pygmalion, as a tale of passion, is hardly more striking than that of the young sculptor who died at the base of the statue of Charles II, in the Royal Exchange — the victim of persevering but triumphant genius.

IX.

So when the good and great go down,
Their statues shall arise
To crowd those temples of our own,
Our fadeless memories!
And when the sculptur'd marble falls,
And Art goes in to die,
Our forms shall live in holier halls,
The Pantheon of the sky!

1830.

PRIZE POEM.

Spoken by Mr George H. Barrett, on the opening of the Bowery Theatre, New York, Monday evening, October 23, 1826.

In the old days when Athens wore her crown,
And temples swell'd beneath her classic frown;
When Gods to leave their starry thrones began,
And stoop'd to bless the infancy of man;
Apollo claim'd the empire of the Mind,
And form'd the Drama to subdue mankind.
Rude Art at first beguil'd his ruder age,
His hope the Muse, * Obscurity his stage;
Severe in grace, with matchless majesty,
Curl'd his proud lip and glanc'd his eagle eye!
On man he drew the consecrated bow,
And laid the Python of the Spirit low.
Then, with the glories of his bards unfurl'd,
He burst in radiance on a waking world,
And in the beauty of undying youth,
Unveil'd the mirror of eternal Truth!

* *His hope the muse, &c.* The early chorus.

But night came down on Athens, and red war
Fir'd the rich altar of the conqueror;
The Nine, in horror fled the quivering wire,
And Mars' hoarse trumpet drown'd Apollo's lyre!
Oblivion star'd o'er Grecia's desert seas,
And the wind moan'd throughout her palaces.
Barbarian hands impell'd the doom of years,
Mercy was gone, and Genius stood in tears!

Italia then grew beautiful, the wave
That whelm'd all Greece in one unpitying grave,
Roll'd till a rainbow broke upon its gloom,
And spann'd the arches of immortal Rome!

Lo! here the God unbinds his golden hair,
And his young presence fills the enchanted air.
Wild passion-sounds the listening spirit thrill,
And music floats round each melodious hill.
But ah! thy palaces, and halls, and waves,
Land of bright souls! too beautiful for graves!
It was not thine to win with dew-lit flowers,
The tragic maid to dally in thy bowers;
Truth, like thy marbles, was as cold and dead,
The Heart was wanting — and the Drama fled!
Yes, from that land of heaven-enkindled fire,
Where Maro tun'd his harp, and Dante smote his lyre!

Not long she tarried with the troubadour,*
Mid souls as sparkling as the skies were pure;

* *Not long she tarried with the troubadour.*
Referring to the Drama in France more particularly.

Not yet her vision'd hour had come — not yet,
As in her dreams, had Art and Nature met.
Reason still rose o'er Fiction's painted fears,
And gave but sadness where she ask'd for tears!
At last as Hope, bright-sandal'd Hope went by,
A high-brow'd minstrel started on her eye!
Hurried through Heaven the shouts of welcome run,
She calls on Shakspeare, and her throne is won!

And ours is Shakspeare — on these classic walls
He and his Queen shall hang their coronals;
Here peerless Taste her wreath of buds shall twine,
And Beauty bind it round her fragrant shrine;
Here Music bend above her sounding wires,
Where Genius guards his hallow'd altar-fires;
Whilst wizard Eloquence shall triumph here,
And Poetry herself in steps of light appear!
Here bold-brow'd Guilt shall cower in kindred shame,
And mirror'd Virtue point the track to fame;
Here pensive Wo shall court her soothing wiles,
And here rude Mirth be chasten'd into smiles.
Here dew-ey'd Youth with kindly Age shall stray,
And meteor Wit leap lightly round their way;
Here Man, portray'd, shall yet illume the age,
And Woman's grace throw magic round the stage!
And while the sun of Freedom lights our clime,
Through all the smiles and all the storms of time,
Here, to the last, shall patriot pride command,
Our motto still, 'Our Glory and our Land!'

LINES,

On the two hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of Boston.
1830.

O THRON'D Enchanter of the proudest clime,
Cloth'd with thy sceptre wand — relentless Time!
That bowest empires to thy charter'd sway,
Thyself unchang'd mid Glory and Decay,
Now the loud tribute of our joy we bring,
And the last wonder of thy magic sing.

Old visions of the past! — The ancient land
Where, to the echo of a strange command,
Quick to the heaving earth, as fables sung,
From dragons' teeth a giant people sprung,
Scarce saw a nobler miracle than Ye —
First of the Pilgrim heart, and Empire of the Free

Two hundred years their cloudy pinions spread
Above the still, green pillows of the dead,
Where the gray fathers with the children lie —
Each grave an altar-place of Liberty!
Two hundred years! — and on this hallow'd ground
Now shaking with the joy that bursts around,

Where swings with solemn beat the Sabbath bell,
Rung the green forest to the Indian's yell,
As forth he flitted with his sounding bow
To the tall pine's far music, wild and low!
Here too, where Freedom's shout the concave fills,
Oft slept unearthly silence round the hills;
The scatter'd smoke-wreaths up in quiet curl'd
Over the dim wood's lone untrampled world;
And here, where sweeps a city's length'ning roar,
No sound save ocean's peal'd along the shore!

Then wreathe the mantling cup — let incense rise —
Let every heart go forth in sacrifice
To the great God that bore our fathers on,
'Till empire mid the wilderness was born!

Two hundred years! — the coming bard shall sweep
His ringing lyre, till sire and son shall weep
The fast blest tears of ecstasy, to hear
The high and wondrous story of our cheer!

Already flashing to our glorious skies,
See spiry temples spring, and domes arise!
Here busy Art her hundred hands employs,
And Wealth pours onward with her ocean noise;
Taste, still severe, unveils her classic brow,
And countless shapes of Beauty round her bow;
Science in smiles unbars her radiant door,
And Grace, in Woman, treads her golden floor!

So let it be forever. Let our eyes
Catch still new glories with a glad surprise;

But yet those forest hills remember'd be
Of thy young years — fair City of the Sea !
And while new wonders gather as we gaze,
May nobler splendor light thy coming days ;
And hence, each year in broader lines unfold
Tales proud as this which centuries have told !

ODE,

Composed by request of the New England Society of the City and County of New York, for the Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims, 22d Dec. 1832.

I.

Not all the loftiest memories
That rose on earlier days,
When with the trump, and sacrifice,
And swelling pomp of praise,
Men gather'd to their pillar'd halls,
Mid garlands, joy, and wine,
To gaze on heroes round the walls
In marble made divine,

II.

And pour the deep libation there
To victors pass'd away,
Or minds, whose wonders rich and rare
Pour'd splendor on their day —
Not all, in finer hearts, can vie
With those that summon here,
To lift, on Freedom's clarion high,
The anthem of our cheer!

III.

We sing a nobler race than pass'd
In ancient times to glory,
We sing of deeds that shall outlast
In fame, all classic story;
Of men who fought for God, and gave
Home for a desert shore —
With hearts too panoplied and brave
To quail beneath its roar.

IV.

Of exiles of a deathless line,
And proud, unshrinking brow;
Lone pilgrims to a rocky shrine,
Where a people bends them now;
A rocky shrine — unshelter'd — rude —
Where the wild wolf from his lair
Shriek'd thro' the pathless solitude,
And broke the voice of prayer!

V.

We sing of heroes who outdid
The boast of chivalry;
Whose valor brav'd the shock amid
A stormy sea and sky:
Whose deeds were deeds of Mercy, done
To persecuted Man;
Whose wreaths were wreaths of triumph, won
In Virtue's fearless van!

VI.

New England's fathers ! — Men who dar'd
The agony of years ;
Whom pale Oppression never spar'd,
But could not bow to tears ;
Who mid the howl of winter fled,
And your banner here unfurl'd,
And Conscience in her pride outled
Unfetter'd to the world !

VII.

Pilgrims of Glory ! there shall rise
Fast praise from heart and tongue
Of all, for whom in sacrifice,
Like martyr saints ye sprung ;
And their children's children shall outpour
From echoing clime to clime,
New pæans for the toils ye bore,
In a nation's morning time.

VIII.

Two hundred years their cloudy wings
Expand above your graves,
And lo ! what wide-flush'd glory flings
O'er all New England's waves !
Fathers of Liberty ! — to Ye
We lift the wine-cup now —
Yours be the hallow'd memory
That consecrates our vow.

IX.

And should the voice of Prophecy
That's doom'd us to the dust,
E'er chant the requiem of the Free,
By Tyranny accurs'd,
O be a remnant true to her ! —
Sons whom New England bore !
Together seek one sepulchre
On Plymouth's sounding shore !

'When he had seen Mr Hunt established in the Casa Lanfranchi with Lord Byron at Pisa, Mr Shelley returned to Leghorn, for the purpose of taking a sea excursion; an amusement to which he was much attached. During a violent storm the boat was swamped, and the party on board were all drowned. Their bodies were, however, afterwards cast on shore; Mr Shelley's was found near Via Reggio, and being greatly decomposed, and unfit to be removed, it was determined to reduce the remains to ashes, that they might be carried to a place of sepulture. Accordingly preparations were made for the burning.

'Wood in abundance was found on the shore, consisting of old trees and the wrecks of vessels: the spot itself was well suited for the ceremony. The magnificent bay of Spezia was on the right, and Leghorn on the left, at equal distances of about two-and-twenty miles. The headlands project boldly far into the sea; in front lie several islands, and behind, dark forests and the cliffy Appennines. Nothing was omitted that could dignify and exalt the mournful rites with the associations of classic antiquity; frankincense and wine were not forgotten. The weather was serene and beautiful, and the pacified ocean was silent, as the flame rose with extraordinary brightness. Lord Byron was present — but he should himself have described the scene, and what he felt.

'These antique obsequies were undoubtedly affecting; but the return of the mourners from the burning, is the most appalling orgia, without the horror of crime, of which I have ever heard. When the duty was done, and the ashes collected, they dined and drank much together; and bursting from the calm mastery with which they had repressed their feelings during the solemnity, gave way to frantic exultation. They were all drunk; they sang — they shouted, and their barouche was driven like a whirlwind through the forest.'

Galt. Life of Byron, p. 182.

THE BURNING OF SHELLEY.

It was hot noon on Spezia's quivering shore.
No loomy cloud was hanging from the sky
Its broad wing'd shadow o'er the heated sand,
Nor breeze from the cool hollow of the blue
Was veering to the hills — but the dim air
Stood like a stirless deep 'twixt earth and heaven.
It was so silent that the practis'd ear
Could catch, at times, the beating of lone bells
From shores the eye could reach not. Sounds so low
They seem'd like bells struck in the upper sky!

Above, the cliffy Appennine look'd down,
With all its quiet woods, that hung like plumes,
Of some vast giant band, in deep repose
Over the slumbering sea. And mirror'd there
Upon the pale blue water, darkly true,
The stern broad-fronted hills lean'd off — and slept
Like some new crown'd creation 'neath the wave.

The air was full of silence — and unbroken,
Save where, with vasty volume, the slow wing
Of some uprising sea-bird parted it,
As he swept heavy from the weltering rocks,

And with wet plumes went screaming to his pine.
But stillness closed upon his wake, and quick
The air fell quiet round his lonely flight.

On either hand, far reaching to the sea,
The towering headlands threw their shaggy arms
As barriers to the billows they defied;
And oft some turret from the crags look'd out,
Those old and rocky homes whose tide-beat walls
Had laugh'd the rage of centuries to scorn!
While as the eye glanc'd onward where the land
Stretch'd sleepily away, till earth and sky
Met in their dim embrace, there might be seen
Thro' the rich haze some far faint glare of gold,
And outlines of old towers — the tracery
Of some great city bosom'd on the blue,
Where earth and sky and clouds all meet—the shapes
Half real and half dreams — that mock our sleep!

Against that pictur'd shore — a thing of life,
Glad in the luxury of its bending woods,
The frequent island lifted from the main,
That lav'd it in its beauty. Flooded all
With the noon light, they slept upon the deep,
Gemming its broad and pale magnificence
As glowing emeralds some queenly brow
That treasures 'neath it rare and wondrous things!

Between the nearest island and the cliff,
A low, black shallop, with her slight array,
Lay rocking on the sea. Her pointed spars
Bow'd graceful to the reaching of the tide

As it swept churming to the weary shore.
The flag half-hoisted, droop'd about the mast,
Speaking of sorrow — and perchance of death.
A signal that a heavy time had come
Along the joyous deck — where song and glee
Are wont to hold unmingled festival.
But stillness too was there. No sign of life
Broke on the eye or ear. The lifting bark
Swung aimless on the billow — till she seem'd
A phantom ship, moor'd by some wizard spell!

Now issuing on the shore behold them come,
With bent uncover'd heads — a scatter'd band,
Perusing the still earth with serious eyes,
And gathering, as bereft ones, to a grave
Where hope has laid her latest and her best.
They tread the heated sand — and oft a flush
Gleams over each fix'd countenance as tho'
Far memories, uncontrollable, came up
And master'd every feeling as they rose.
As tho' in the eclipse that shadow'd them
Their hearts despair'd of light like that which clos'd
Upon their morning time; the promises
Which were most glorious when they wither'd — e'en
When all their garner'd splendors were unveil'd.

* * * * * *

Their steps had center'd upon hallow'd ground,
And from the scatter'd fragments of the shore,
Wrecks of a hundred years — old argosies;
An altar-place was form'd — and as it rose,
No word escap'd the builders; and when done,

And eye met eye above its rude repose,
Each one drew back — and with slow-folded arms
Stood gazing seaward, in expectancy.
There were white brows, and lofty miens, and eyes,
That bore a classic sorrow in their gaze.
And as they cluster'd round with lifting hair
And silken dress scarce stirring to the breeze,
You could have caught the noble bearing there
Of fine poetic spirits round their shrine!

A boat is on the wave — and a rent flag
Is wav'd above the dark and stalwart arms
That made it leap the waters. One is there,
In the deep stern, with cap and plume flung back,
And on his pallid face are blent the lines,
The channel'd lines of care, and that high look
Which sadder natures gather from their thoughts,
When busy with the future, or the past,
And the whole heart is lost in poetry!

The boat is on the shore — and hands come fast
In hurried ministration over one
Who late laugh'd cheerliest o'er her side — but now,
Who lies in death's strange solemn beauty there!
And as they meet, they clasp — in that hard strain
Whose pressure is a language in that hour
That seals our destiny of nothingness!

The corpse, uncanopied — save by the brows,
The pale and proud that meet above it — lies
With a rude sea-cloak shrouded, for a pall,
And its damp hair all glittering to the sun.
They gaze, intensely — they who late had sat,

Companions of the dead — and heard him harp
His heart's wild music out, till tears of joy
Came in one mingled tribute to his song,
And all who heard him marvel'd at his lay.
They gaze, then press their rocking bosoms down,
And bend them to their office. Not more deep,
Yet not more silent and chastis'd the grief
Of the proud Spartan mother when her boy
Came on his shield from slaughter — not more deep
The passionate embrace of glory's son
By her who saw his cradle and his grave,
Was the stern sorrow of each breast that bore
That clay against its pulses. One by one
They bow upon the body in lament
That has no words, no sobbings, and no tears !

The frame is lifted to the altar-place ;
The ivory brow and bosom are unbar'd,
And a slight vesture veils the polish'd limbs
Of one who yesterday went forth — a man !
His hair about his temples hangs like night,
And the just parted lips, like chisel'd stone,
Yet speak the statue's sculptur'd eloquence.
His friends come near for the last time to gaze
Upon that marble beauty of the dead
That seems just not immortal, when the shrine
Of that triumphant genius that lights earth
As with unearthly lustre ; when the shrine
Of a vast mind that fathom'd nature down
To depths before undreamt of — that saw hues,
Heard sounds, felt wonders in the wave and sky,
That few of mortal mould had visited !

The pile is fir'd! the flame breaks up to Heaven;
Its arrowy tongue plays lambent on the air,
And now in one transparent blaze it goes
Strait to the sun — a pyramid of fire!
And through the quivering element they look'd
And saw each other's faces round the pyre,
Not sad or joyous, but with that dim light
Upon each lifted feature that unveils
A history of thoughts that only come
O'er such high spirits mid a rite like this.

The flame bears broadly to the cloudless skies,
Waveless and with strange hues. It was no dream,
That the impalpable and fine element
That forms the spirit in us, mingled there
With that which in the old and heathen time
Shadow'd its deep intensity — No dream,
That the pure symbol of the sacred fire
Which once had typified the soul, was now
Full of that same divinity. It seem'd
As tho' some subtile essence wing'd the flame,
And gave it a new glory!
— Lo! once more
The sudden flame leaps up — as if in joy
To canopy a bright spirit with a light
Subduing and intense as that deep fire,
That intellectual ardor that did burn
About his soul in its last ecstasies!

And now about the roaring element,
Girt for their solemn priesthood, see them come,
With cypress fillets in their tangled hair,

And goblets in their hands. — Mid flame they pour
The red libation o'er him with a vow,
And scatter the frankincense. A thin smoke
Floats from the pyre, and sails along the sand,
Till lost amid its foam. A rich perfume
Fills the warm sky, the scent of quenching wine
And gums of Araby, stifling the sense
With one oppressive odor. — It was done —
The flame grew dim, and sunk, and as it died,
A flutter mid the limbs of the vast trees
That overhung the shore — the Appenines,
Rose like a sigh of nature, and the sea
Did seem to shudder as it welter'd on.

They gather'd up the ashes. And away
Where the impatient steed with trampling hoof
Beat the loud earth, they hurried, with quick breath,
As from some spell escap'd — to air and life !
The forest echoed to their snorting steeds
And the quick wheels — and voices too were there,
As of a band of Bacchanals in flight
From some strange rites — the orgies of despair !

To any one, who, even at this day, may visit the scene of devastation which forms the subject of the following pages, the language here employed, it is believed, will not seem too strong. Indeed, it appears to me, that there can be no justice done to the scene in honest, sober-spoken prose. There is, or *was*, connected with it, something beyond the power of description in the words of formal narrative; and one can hardly conceive, as he stands upon the terrible spot, that even poetry can exaggerate the silent but awful story which it tells.

It will be perceived that in the Second Part of this Poem I have taken the extreme license of the species of composition which I have chosen. I have done this, both because the subject matter seemed to demand it, as above suggested, and because I believe, in instances of this stirring character, that the chance of being successful, both in your own apprehension and that of readers, is greatly increased by adopting this style in the attempted description. I am aware that I have assumed much of the latitude peculiar to the lyrical department; but to those of my readers who are acquainted with the full range of English poetry of this species, it will be evident that I have by no means transgressed the outer bounds, while, did I deem any apology necessary for taking the measure I have, I am satisfied in barely referring to the Curse of Kehama. But this must be tedious, and perhaps appear like an endeavor to give an undue importance to the Poem, where there is no necessity for it — and I refrain.

The journals of the time abounded with descriptions of this catastrophe — and some idea of it may be gathered from reading them. It may be enough here, merely to observe that the dwelling, which was so miraculously preserved, in this falling of the hills, is about two miles east of the gorge, or extremely narrow

pass, known by the name of the *Notch* of the White Mountains. The storm had been heavy and unceasing for some days upon the surrounding country, and the family inhabiting the house referred to, was roused at midnight by the crash and thunder of the falling earth. They fled — and were overwhelmed in an instant. Had they remained under the roof, their lives would have been safe. The dwelling is now standing — as it then stood — a monument of wonderful and mysterious escape.

The Saco river, which ran through the valley, was lifted from its bed, and forced into new channels; and the whole spot, which I had seen but a short season before, as a beautiful and verdant opening amid the surrounding rudeness and deep shadow, was now like a stretch of desolate sea-shore after a tempest — full of wrecks, buried in sand or in rocks, crushed and ground to atoms.

To allay any rising feeling of unbelief in the mind of the difficult reader, it may be safe to inform him that a sort of running descent from Mount Washington is not by any means impracticable — the rocks lying so, that a rapid leap downward from one to the other is quite easy, on an emergency; and that the tremendous ridge directly opposite the Notch-House is entirely bald to the very summit, and opens on a view of the whole valley below; so that, as a point of observation of the whole work of ruin, it may be supposed perfectly unobstructed to an observer on its terrible edge. The falls of earth commenced at the very top of this ridge. It is full opposite the cottage made so memorable, and is often ascended by the traveller.

THE BURIED VALLEY.

PART I.

> Give me your hand: You are now within a foot
> Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon
> Would I not leap upright ———
> ———look up — the shrill gorg'd lark so far
> Cannot be seen or heard ———
>
> KING LEAR.

O MOUNTAIN land! — along whose peerless brow,
Crown'd with its old and cloudy diadem,
I've wound my frequent pilgrimage, to bow
On the gray summit of the glittering gem — (1)
To meet the sun and storm — and pour my voice
In shouting to the winds above me pealing.
How deeply now, with silent footstep stealing
Along thy bearded crags, would I rejoice
To see thee lifting on my waken'd eye
Like black unfathom'd billows to the sky,
Stay'd in their rolling course at God's command,
And chain'd to earth — a dim and sullen band!

O mountain land! how chang'd — yet how unchang'd!
How like the rugged front of former years,
Yet how unlike the valleys I had rang'd
Before its loneliest turf was wet with tears!
How changeless yet — tho' struggling with the storms,
As in past thousand winters soars thy rock,
Summit of glory! — chief of kingly forms
That bide the lightning and the thunder-shock.
How changeless in thy crown of snow, thou first
And heavenliest pinnacle of the vast hills,
Whose Kremlin rank the empyrean fills;
That from the ocean wilderness dost burst
Some tall sea-monument upon the eye
Of the tir'd ship-boy, rocking in the sky;
How changeless in thy summer robe of gray,
Where, wrapt in stern magnificence, away
Thou tow'rest to the air — the monarch mount,
Bathing thy brow in light's eternal fount!

O mountain land! — how my young spirit leaps,
After long years to tread thy heights again,
And with the clouds to hang along thy steeps,
And watch the river sweeping to the main.
Long years! But not the necromance of Time
Can dim the shapes of memory sublime —
Thy cliffs and waters — when with shivering breath
I gaz'd through vistas of the rocking pine,
And saw below the silent gulf of death,
And over me, as near, the realms divine!
Long years! but ah! how few the days of joy
Like those which fill'd my heart with glorious dreams,
When, panting thro' them all — a revelling boy,
I call'd on Echo by thy crags and streams!

Time has brought sadness on his sounding wings,
And I have look'd on changing, weary things,
Shadows of parting beauty — happiness
Too pure, a soul like mine, too long to bless.
So have we all. The better things of earth
Link with decay, or perish in their birth;
Our days, a troubled current, have swept on,
And half our pearls have vanish'd in the tide.
The gems that make our treasury of life,
Worn for a day, in light — then dimm'd and gone —
All snatch'd or scatter'd in the fatal strife
And toils that Man's best pilgrimage abide.

Change! change! — the fields are dotted o'er with graves,
And Man and Empires to their common fate
Have pass'd in silence, while the long grass waves
Its green flags o'er the dead and desolate!

How many sorrows crowd into our years,
To dull the features and to blanch the brow!
And at what intervals each joy appears,
Born but of yesterday and vanish'd now!
Hopes sunk, and blasted love, and wither'd hearts —
Beauty just made to spell us as it parts —
Friends that allure — angelic infancy,
With its strange cherub language of the sky —
Kind voices, whose low echo round our path,
So full of consolation, that we seem
In God's vast mercy to forget his wrath,
And pass from our best vigils, till we dream.
These are but gifts to man — the inheritance
Which won to-day, to-morrow is borne hence,

And he, an exile in a world all strange,
Roams with faint steps, recoiling at the change!

But ye, ye mountains, lifting to the stars,
From your deep rocky base of centuries,
That catch first radiance when the East unbars,
And hold the last when gorgeous daylight dies,
No change is written on your forehead bare,
Nor Time nor Death may claim an empire there.
The trees still wave their verdure — green in age —
Still foams the cascade in its noisy rage;
Still hangs the tottering rock, as erst it hung,
When wild men upward from the forest sprung,
To pay the tribute of orison rude
On that sky-altar's towering solitude.
Still sways the sighing pine in dreary dells,
And still th' imprison'd ice as sunless dwells,
As when emerging from Creation's flood,
Those everlasting peaks sublimely stood!
Man, man alone, with change is written o'er,
But Nature scorns all vassalage to Time and Power!

How strong this mountain-land! — how eloquent!
How large the living lesson that it reads!
Lines of magnificence with beauty blent;
Sublime rebuke of mortal and his deeds.
Here where decay sweeps onward in despair,
Or plants her foot, impressionless, to gaze
As some bald eagle from the upper air,
With kindling eye rejoicing in its blaze,
On the scath'd pathway of her victories;
Here, when the thunder to these iron walls,

With its immortal voice uplifts aloud
In noble music from the posting cloud,
Yet on each pinnacle unheeded falls,
The mountain-tower unscath'd tho' not unshaken,
'Mid shouts that earth's deep sepulchres awaken,
O here let man come up — that atom, man,
Spoil of to-day that yesterday began ;
Here learn what littleness is human power,
What very shame his glory of an hour ;
What a poor pageantry his pomp appears,
Seen in dim prospect from this mount of years.
His pride how meagre, and how weak his hate,
How mean the mightiest of the tinsell'd great ;
How wicked all the scorn — how vain the strife
With which he sicklies o'er his palsied life ;
O'er all, what madness to forget, defy
The dread Omnipotence of earth and sky ;
As tho' the leprous son of guilt and sin
Might storm the path to Heaven — and enter in !
Let him come up — and when his troubled thought
From this unchangeable reverts to read
The record of the past, with change o'erwrought,
Life's scenes all passing like a winged steed,
As swift and stayless — the strong things of earth
On which he lean'd with frequent, fond delay,
Unthinking that their history was a day,
And thus forgot his duty in his mirth,
Then let him listen and in silence learn !
There shall be music round him ; he shall hear
A voice of melody in reason's ear,
From every mountain-summit — every burn,
Each vale and cliff and stream — till he shall leap

To join that anthem to the azure deep.
He shall feel incense rising round him there,
As from a thousand altars — and shall kneel
Unconscious as its volumes round him steal,
And bow to Nature, summoning to prayer!
Let him come up; — perhaps the heart unwrung
By any human voice that breath'd of heaven;
That in earth's temples wearily has hung
On mortal lips, may here to God be given!
No tongue of man can syllable His name
Persuasively as Nature, 'mid her mount,
And pleasant valley, and unruffled fount;
No discord mars her mingled orison,
But clear as first thro' Eden's bloom it came,
It falls on man. The music of its tone
Wins back the spirit from its apathy,
And charms it upward from each meaner tie,
Till praise comes sounding on retiring scorn,
And all the heart to harmony is born!

Once more, O mountain land! I turn to thee,
Not as I trod thee once, with footstep free,
Free as the breeze that sweeps along thy walls,
And spirits bounding as thy waterfalls —
But with the sick pace of a weary child,
Whose heart, by sights of glory unbeguil'd,
As to sad music feels its pulses beat
To the slow cadence of unwilling feet.
Now, with but feeble tread I faltering glide
Under the arches of thy frowning side,
Bow'd to the arrowy power of panting Pain,
That will not let me to thy peaks again.

O for the buried years! when I could climb
With step advent'rous to thy brow sublime;
When, leapt the rock, and clear'd the bushy dell,
I mounted onward where the sun's farewell
Play'd like an echo round that citadel,
The first where morning's herald lustre fell;
When with a panting breast, and reeking hair
I walk'd thy parapets in highest air,
And saw from summits where the tempest leans
Her flashes darting to thy deep ravines;
And clouds beneath, against the gloomy trees
Trailing their broad-wing'd pennons to the breeze;
And still below, as winds o'er bending grass,
In giant train the mountain shadows pass,
While the sharp thunder, in its voice of rage,
Shook every deep rock to its anchorage!

'Tis well — I tread thy vale this starry night
With the quick breathing of a still delight.
I gaze upon thy beauty — and I feel
In shuddering contrast on my memory steal
That hour of terror, when my spirit quail'd
Before the blasting front of Power unveil'd!

O mountains of my land! be each broad tower
And broader base, of all thy glorious band,
Emblem of Freedom in her royal power,
The same, unshaken, while the world shall stand!
Soar with thy massy walls — old barriers,
Communing with the realm of snows and stars!
Till to Time's trumpet-summons from afar,
Shall pass away, with noise, thy Alps, America!

He who with sad and ling'ring tread,
As o'er the sods that seal the dead,
Winds up among the clustering hills
That yonder North horizon fills,
Glancing with glad and frequent eye
From vale to cliff — from cliff to sky,
Still wondering which enchants him more,
The woods that sleep, or mounts that soar,
Will feel his pulses leap anew,
As issuing 'neath the intensest blue
Of the pure heavens, that seem to bow
With a strange nearness o'er him now,
He passes from the tangled way
Where chequer'd sunbeams faintly play,
From arching trees with moss o'erlaid,
That drooping plumage of the shade,
And all the forest's settled glooms,
Damp as a labyrinth of tombs —
And finds his footsteps sudden stand,
As spell'd by some resistless wand,
On the stern portals of the scene
Where Ruin at her feast hath been.

Alas ! to him, if other years,
Ere Nature told this tale of tears,
Saw him a pilgrim wandering wide
By quiet glen or mountain side,
This valley had unbosom'd all
The countless beauties that enthral,

In their unutter'd mystery,
The painter's or the poet's eye.
He then had heard, like breezes waking,
The mountain tide below him breaking
The silence of its winding way
'Mong giant trees and granite gray,
Unseen, save where with flashing foam
It dash'd beneath its verdant dome,
Thro' openings dim, with tangled boughs,
Where stags unstartled lov'd to browse ;
And upwards, as the lifted eye
Follow'd those ramparts of the sky,
Leaning in noble curve away
Against the blue unclouded day,
Had trac'd the drapery of woods
Girt round those hallow'd solitudes
In folds of verdure broad and deep
To brow of each o'ertoppling steep.
Then from the threshold of the vale,
When summer days grew cool and pale,
Full oft his eye had glanc'd again
O'er bending grass and yellow grain,
And his ear heard, in welcome peals
Of far-off cadence, from his fields
Man's voice in faint hallooings come,
Shouting his harvest cheerly home !
The call of mirth ; the Alpine horn,
Breaking the liquid air of morn,
And at faint eve the prattling sound
Of children from the busy ground,
In tones of charter'd infancy
Filling the drowsy air with glee :

The lowing herd, and jangled bell,
And every sound that links farewell
To the tir'd heart's last memory —
The home just left, or sever'd tie !

There, too, upon his eye had broke
Slow columns of the cottage smoke,
Reliev'd in blue and dreamy lines
'Gainst the vast armies of the pines,
Or lost, while journeying to the air,
Among the peaks so dim and bare !
And oft his glance had rested then,
On pilgrim from the upper glen,
Pale with the toil he faintly bore,
Stretch'd at that low, but friendly door,
And gazing with a look intent
Midway the arching firmament,
To grasp that edg'd and rocky range
That aw'd him with a power so strange,
Rising before the astonish'd eye,
Some mighty pathway to the sky ;
Where, while he trod its horrid brink,
Would man to minim seem to shrink ;
And voice outpour'd, and arm upflung,
Had dimly wav'd, and faintly rung,
And the broad eagle on the wing
Had flitted but an insect thing ;
It seem'd a barrier to outlast
All walls by nature round her cast,

And when day's pinions furl'd,
So high it bore against the blue,
Across the valley's depth it threw
The shadow of a world!

Now, stranger, as thy weary feet
Pause where such sad memorials meet,
Upon this vestibule of hills,
Where, be it living pulse, it thrills
In one delighted, quick response
To glory from her thousand fonts,
Here gather from the wreck you scan,
What wrath led on the tempest's van;
What stormy demons trampled here,
Exulting in their mad career;
Dost ask the story of that time?
Then read it in this scene sublime!
Read it in every bristling mound
That starts from Ruin's tented ground;
Where, as to gird for Death again,
Red havoc had encamp'd her then!
Read it in each eraseless line
On shiver'd rock and splinter'd pine;
In the black trunk of giant trees,
That to the loudest mountain breeze
In all its billowy rush and roar
Had scarcely sway'd their plumes before,
Torn from their cloudy summits then,
To stoop their green tops to the glen,
And now upshooting round your path
The storm's strong monuments of wrath;

Read it in every sullen pile
That fronts you in the deep defile,
Where, lifted from its ancient bed
The river in its thunder sped
Its thronging waters with a shout,
Rending its deep-ribb'd channel out,
Till thro' the valleys fast and free
It held loud triumph to the sea!

Or, ask you more! Then glance again
Where the still noontide in its wane
Against the quivering atmosphere
Hath left yon ranges sharp and clear!
Your answering cheek may well grow pale
To this, the horror of the tale!
Read it on that broad-fronted page
That fades not with the touch of age,
In characters by God engrav'd
On brows that storm and time had brav'd;
Read, where from summit to the dell
Her mail'd and mighty footsteps fell,
In that loud night's terrific hour
When lurid Vengeance leagued with power,
And the rent earth careering went
Before the lashing element
In madd'ning and resistless leap,
To thunders' call from steep to steep!

* * * * * *

Stranger, come hither when the night
Puts on her coronal of light,
And first the clear-ey'd moon unbars
From yonder peak mid paling stars,

Pouring its flooding radiance in
On every torrent's deep ravine,
And gaze in wondering silence there!
Then, if no heart that bids to prayer
And worship beat within thee, vain
All voices from the earth again!
Nature is dead to souls like thine,
And, exil'd to her murkiest mine,
Thine be the doom of buried years,
O man, untouch'd by joy or tears!

It is no tale of mad Romance,
The youthful spirit to entrance,
No legend of young love, to chime
To music of the minstrel's rhyme,
No lore made reverend with age,
Trac'd faintly back from son to sage,
And hallowing many a meaner scene,
That stirs you in this vale, I ween;
No story of some ruffian band,
Here in the shadow of the land,
Where Murder with his bloody eye
And lifted arm stood waiting by;
No lines of warrior memory
Stain the reft granite where we lie;
A better than the weary tale
Of slighted hopes and friends that fail,
Of passion's pride — ambition's art —
That touch the sense but tire the heart,
Or all the marvels that appear
Within the Poet's peopled sphere;
An inspiration purer — higher,
Has lur'd him to his humble lyre,

And woke the musing bard to fling
So rude a hand along its string —
A story of our children's time —
Simple — yet saddening and sublime !

Stranger ! yon mansion where you gaze,
Under that mount of other days,
Where human voice from other walls
In faintest echo never falls —
That only cot for rugged miles
Which rises mid these giant piles,
Heard once the household song of mirth
Around its rude and humble hearth.
It rose with quiet roof and lowly
O'er kindly hearts and spirits holy.
The father of the little flock
Saw worship in the rill and rock —
And taught his children lessons high
Drawn from this broad immensity !
A silent pilgrimage he trod,
With but his bible and his God.
Familiar voices, that impart
A solace to the sternest heart,
And are its glory when they rise,
The quick, untutor'd melodies
Of kind and peaceful spirits, given
Each to its home, and all to Heaven —
These were his music — and he went
Along his lighted path, content ;
Howe'er the chequer'd moments ran,
They found him still an ' honest man.'

That humble cot ! — 'tis silent now !
No smoke-wreath to the mountain's brow
Curls from its low, o'er-shadow'd roof —
No steed, with loud impatient hoof
Calls to the girded traveller more
To quit the hospitable door —
No voice is ringing on the sky,
That tells of careless childhood by —
But often now the sullen bear
Is seen with stealthy footstep there,
And oft the high and antler'd deer,
With glorious eye, and front of fear,
Around its door is wont to stoop,
Till to some hunter's distant whoop,
Or trampling hoof and rattling wheel,
He answers with his glancing heel.

No summer sound ! but when the year
Has wrapt it in its mantle sere,
And winter in its roar and sweep
Comes, like the sounding of the deep,
In blinding drift adown the glen,
Voices are there — and quickly then
On yonder walls, now dark, perchance
A dazzling light shall upwards glance,
Or from the half-clos'd window stream
Out on the troubled air its gleam,
A welcome beacon — red and bright,
To panting pilgrim of the night —
A signal that await him here
A blazing hearth and homely cheer.

The cottage roof! — but where is he
Who lov'd devotion's bended knee?
And they who call'd him father — where
The clustering band that bow'd to prayer?
And woke to worship's simple lay
With coming dawn and evening gray?
I could — but, stranger, what avail
To tell thee of that night of wail!
The dreadful summons came at last
In thunder — and their spirits pass'd!

And, stranger, not yon hallow'd ground
That heaves that lowly cottage round,
Uplifting thro' this quiet gloom
Memorial of that mountain doom,
Nor yet the turf on which we tread
Veils the dull ashes of the dead;
But there — beside the silent river,
Down where the stars begin to quiver,
Under the shadow of the steep,
They bow'd them to their dreamless sleep —
Swept hand in hand unsever'd there —
Grav'd in one mountain sepulchre!
I saw them — from yon rocky tower —
Lone witness of that night of power.

Nay, list'ner — start not — for I bear
No charmed life — the cloak I wear
Tho' 'inky,' veils no wizard form,
But one who loves the wind and storm,
And to their music oft has strode
Up to their rocking dim abode,

When other heads had cower'd to hear
The voices of their lofty cheer;
Who even drew a wild delight
From the mad tumult of that night
When every element in wrath
Was leaping on its sounding path.

But come — and while on yonder cliffs
Like surf the white moon-vapor drifts,
And pictures forth a weltering sea,
That dream of glory still to me,
Let us, as round us bows the night,
And stars and meteors break to light,
Seek the lone roof that calls us there
Its silent shelter still to share;
And as the constellations steal
O'er us, on swift but noiseless wheel,
From the low window let your eye
Peruse yon battlements and sky,
While I above these graves rehearse
To measure of a wildering verse,
The story of that night of gloom
That chang'd this Eden to a tomb!

PART II.

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch —
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry ———

——— the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves: Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard.———

KING LEAR.

I.

I STOOD, as on the summit of the world —
The gray rocks of the sky,
Where bide the thunder and the cloud,
And where the winds go by
As messengers, with wings unfurl'd,
To music quick and loud!

It was the summer time —
Mid-summer o'er the earth;
And under me, in song and mirth,
As bursting from the clime,
I thought the anthem of the land
Roll'd upward — like the chorus of a band!

But no! — as if a grave
Had shut upon the things of life,
As tho' deep death were there,
Not e'en the whisper of a wave
From the far human sea of strife,
Broke on that wilderness of air —
It was the voice of silence — at its ocean chime! (2)

II.

'Twas past the sullen noon —
And o'er that blue and unexplor'd profound,
Came up a dimness — like a breath
From the all-blasting lips of death —
And round the sphere of light
It cast prophetic blight,
Until it rode — red as the distant moon,
On some o'er-murky night,
Above that solitude of sound!

Off into the deep of air
I look'd — and saw the gorgeous clouds take wing,
As some old-vision'd thing,
Shap'd in fantastic dreams; —
I saw them sail in volum'd pomp away
Over the track of day,
Until, grown bloody in his crimson beams,
They hung, as if in waiting there
Around his place of rest,
The hurtling, storm-encompass'd West.
Yet still, above my head
The near — cold azure spread —

And when I upward gaz'd,
As into some clear fount,
Amaz'd,
I saw, as from the hollow of the dew,
It seem'd to bow and bathe the mount
In one transcendent hue! (3)

III.

Once more the mustering sky!
The banner'd host was up in Heaven! —
And on its noiseless march,
By the resistless Presence driven,
Pressing fast onward to the arch
Of yon immensity!
Nature was waking from her dread repose —
And the pent thunder spake
Among the stifling hills. — Then rose
The shrieks of hurrying birds, as fast they brake
From their dim coverts as that sound went by —
Far down among the tossing trees,
Already bowing to the startled breeze!
I gaz'd — and saw them sway,
Those giant trees — away — away —
Down thro' the heaving vapor-drifts,
Flinging their plumy tops to air,
And lashing with their branches bare
The everlasting cliffs
That shadow'd them — like arms of demons in despair!

IV.

And silence yet was round
The tempest-shatter'd peak —
The very death of sound!
When would that strange terrific slumber break!

And there still swept that fervid wheel,
That bore the dying day
From out the troubled firmament!
For yet the pil'd and battling clouds
In stern but shifting crowds,
Under that red globe lay --
And still below it, peal on peal,
As from those frowning masses sent,
The billowy thunder went.
I look'd straight off the pinnacle --
And far into the sun,
I saw the eagle sail -- that brave bold bird
That cowers not till his flight is done,
Nor droops his blazing eye --
He would the elements defy!

V.

But now a shadow cross'd the sky,
And ere my vision fell,
The trumpet of the storm was heard,
In high portentous swell.
Out of the depths it came
Heralded by flood and flame --
And straight the meteor clouds upshot,
At that deep wondrous voice,
Till the high zenith was a blot,
And the veiled sun himself forgot,
Amid that terrible rejoice!
The soaring hills were shaken --
And every cavern'd base,
Responsive to the stormy chase,

That swept like ocean by,
Rung in its far imprison'd revelry,
Where the live earthquake leaps
Up from the deep of deeps,
Till all the elements awaken
To the spirit of the hour,
Forth in his joy and power!

VI.

Then in the fast eclipse
That closed above the land,
As the vast armies of the clouds stoop'd down,
I heard, as from ten thousand lips
Smote by their master's mighty wand,
The blast of all the winds let sudden forth!
The heavens were cleft —
And sweeping from their cloudy dome
Around my rocky throne
They sprung like billows — and about
My ringing head they mingled with a shout,
Like the roaring of the north,
When the deep blue ice is reft,
To its home!
Still stood I on that splinter'd rock,
And saw the mists emerge
In one perpetual birth —
Surge heaving still on surge,
Mid lightning flare and mountain shock,
Like lurid smoke,
In heated, hurrying volumes broke
From one brave altar, wide as earth!

VII.

Not longer should I gaze,
The tumult fill'd my brain!
Yet once — but once, again,
Fast to my mountain pillar clung,
I flung me backward in the blaze,
And bar'd my brow in mad delight
To that appalling sight!
Then, as the war of voices rung
Around my rocky path,
I spurn'd that pillar of the sky,
And sprung
In wild and reckless leap,
Adown that everlasting steep —
And as I went,
I heard above my head the stormy wrath
Outpouring from the firmament
Around that peak so dim and high!

* * * * * *

VIII.

'Twas midnight on the hills!
I stood among the rattling crags,
But far below that thundering mass
Which yonder concave fills,
Where late I stood alone!
I felt strange shadows round me pass,
As tho' huge pinions came
Swooping my fever'd frame;

And often, as it paus'd to moan,
Amid the gloomy glare,
I saw the tempest's cloudy flags
Stream to the troubled air!

IX.

'Twas now the triumph of the hurricane —
Deep night, and power!
Night mid the bellowing storm!
And down the sweltering vale,
The mountain air flew quick and warm,
As tho' some fiery gale
Were driving from the riven earth,
Before the hot volcano's birth!
The garner'd terrors of the sky came out
With battle and with shout,
And oft, upon its wildest route,
The tempest-pause, and lengthen'd wail,
And the rattling of the rain!
Then bow'd each mountain tower —
The rock of other days,
From its summit to its base!
The valley heard the coming flood,
And reel'd its iron walls,
As mid the red revealing
Of the broad flash it roll'd like blood,
And earth sent back the joyous call,
Above it pealing!
And in the blasting light
That rode upon the darkness, I could see,

Leafless and branchless as it rose
Along those beetling brows,
The solitary pine
Up-pointing thro' the drifting clouds of night,
In desolate sublimity !
Old scath'd and quivering trees —
The last and baldest of their line,
The sentinels of centuries !
Then suddenly I caught the misty brow
Of yon embattled ridge, where now,
In squadrons thick and fast,
Of terrible array,
Treading, in mighty ranks those summits grey,
The whirlwind clouds like pillars past,
Till mid a field of flame,
They broke in deluge — and a river,
Tearing its hundred channels, came,
Making the frighten'd glen and hill-top quiver !

X.

But now another sound
From out the midnight shroud,
Burst from the rocking, rended ground —
And lo ! the hills were bow'd
Into that dreadful vale of slaughter,
Before the booming water !

Onward in leap and plunge it came,
And the grinding earth sprung up in flame ;
And the voice of the rocks as they clave asunder,
Rose clear o'er the sounding sea of thunder !

And the light from the van of that terrible march,
Spread upwards and over the driving arch,
Till the fire that broke from their mountain way,
Reveal'd tide and tempest to living day ! (4)

'Twas there ! — 'twas here !
The granite shook beneath my feet —
Back from the waving brink
Like light I sprung — and saw it sink
Off from the flashing precipice,
With a roaring and a hiss,
As tho' in loud career,
Red Ruin in its gulf of revelry to meet !

And there, amid the blaze
Right on its vengeful path
The echoing highway of its wrath,
One lowly roof appears !
Great God ! and has devoted man
Who prays for length of years,
Thus dar'd the earthquake's van !
Breathes there a being here,
In this lone land of fear,
The shadow of the terrible !
Lo ! then — and where the light gleams full
Under that beetling dome,
There is the cottage home !

XI.

Now fix'd as statue's grew my gaze !
Forth from that little cabin sprung

A thing of life — and — suddenly — another !
A human form — and others round it clung.
O God ! perhaps some frantic mother
Bow'd with her children ! — see,
They issue with their arms upflung,
As if in hurried prayer
For the great hills to fall, and yet they flee ;
A household — forth, at night — in agony !
Sped on by black despair !
In vain — in vain !
The tide is on them — flash on flash
The red earth rolls, a madd'ning main,
But they heed not ; hear not cry nor crash,
Nor yet the fiery rain ;
And ere their hands have met
To clasp in common doom,
The whelming foot of Destiny is set
Above their traceless tomb !

I saw them swept
Before that rocky wave ;
They slept,
And Chaos was their grave.

* * * *

No more — no more !
Darkness my vision fills ;
One shriek of horror to the winds I pour —
— I fell upon the hills.

* * * *

XII.

'Twas deep noon as I issued forth
Upon that stricken vale.
Light clouds were coming from the North,
On high and fleecy sail,
And thro' them bow'd the blue,
With the bounding breezes cool,
And a sacred glory rob'd anew,
Intensely beautiful!

It was stern quiet now
Between those massy walls;
And echoless each shatter'd brow
Thro' which the noontide falls.

But hark! the voice of low lament;
A little band steals by,
With lingering feet, and faces bent
Inquiringly.
And seek ye for your friends?—Alas!
So might ye from the bark
Call on the shuddering sea
To render up her dead!
Ye did not see them pass
Without their warning or their shrouds
To their bed,
Deep down, and dark!—
Go—trace the footsteps of the clouds.

XIII.

The cottage-home was there.
A peaceful smoke upcurl'd
Into the stillness, in a slow grey wreath
Over that lonely roof, that stood
The earthquake's leaping breath,
In the pathway of the flood,
Alone unmov'd amid a crumbled world!
The cottage-home — but where, O where,
The voice of mirth,
And children with the bright young hair
That cluster'd round its hearth!
Ask not — ask not the tale —
— Go look upon that Buried Vale!

NOTES.

(1) *On the grey summit of the glittering gem.*

Dr Belknap, in his history of New Hampshire, gives an extended description of the White Mountains. That portion of it which alludes to the superstition that suggested the line above written, is as follows: Referring to the White Mountains he says,—'The Indians gave them the name of Agiocochook: They had a very ancient tradition that their country was once drowned, with all its inhabitants, except one Powaw and his wife, who, foreseeing the flood, fled to these mountains, where they were preserved, and that from them the country was repeopled. They had superstitious veneration for the summit, as the habitation of invisible beings; they never venture to ascend it, and always endeavor to dissuade every one from the attempt. From them, and the captives, whom they sometimes led to Canada, through the passes of these mountains, many fictions have been propagated, which have given rise to marvellous and incredible stories; particularly it has been reported, that at immense and inaccessible heights, there have been seen carbuncles, which are supposed to appear luminous in the night.'

See also Josselyn's Voyage to New England, p. 135, in relation to a part of this superstition.

(2) *It was the voice of silence—at its ocean chime.*

The 'silent audible,' as some one has admirably expressed it, that may be identified with what is called '*wringing in the ears*,' which every one will remember to have experienced, as the consequence of intense silence. It is such an antithesis as is detected in Milton's *visible darkness—palpable obscure*—or the *atro lumine* which Virgil applies to the torch of Alecto.

(3) *It seem'd to bow and bathe the mount*
In one transcendant hue.

This is not all poetry. The ocular deception which I experienced in this instance, was really surprising. I had stretched myself out—thrown entirely on my back—upon one of the huge flat rocks with which the summit of Mount Washington abounds, and half shading my eyes, was listlessly gazing up into the intensely clear sky, and indulging in the train of high thoughts which the situation may be supposed to have called forth. I shall never forget the singularly transparent appearance that the air above me seemed to assume, and more particularly the feeling of *approach*—of *nearness* which the blue medium seemed to make, until I seemed to be immersed in it. Added to this was a sense of coolness pervading the atmosphere as it breathed over my face, that I could not but remark. I wont pretend to account for all this; but so it was. I seemed to have got into the beautiful blue, just as it appears to the eye upon a clear day—when we see it over us, far up and far away.

(4) *'Till the fire that broke from their mountain way,*
Reveal'd tide and tempest to living day.

Incredible as this may seem at first thought, it is nevertheless no poetical assumption. It is safe not only, but natural to believe that the illumination of the whole scene of terror as here described, actually took place, from the fact that a similar occurrence to this tremendous fall of earth, though on a scale comparatively trifling, was observed in a small *village, in the vicinity, some years ago.

It was in a dark night. The earth gave way from the summit of a mountainous ridge in the neighbourhood of the village, and such was the grinding and tearing and collision of the rocky mass in its progress down the valley, that, as I was informed, the atmosphere was bright with the light, and the slide was perceptible in the settlement below, which it illuminated by the stream of fire which accompanied it in its course.

* Waterford, in Oxford County, Maine.

END.

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